

THE
PARSONAGE.

BY
RODOLPH TÖPFFER.

IN TWO VOLS.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
SIMMS AND MINTYRE,
PATERNOSTER ROW, AND DONEGALL STREET, BELFAST.

1848.

BOOK THIRD.

I.

CHARLES TO MARTHA.

*Geneva—towards the end of March.**

THIS time I have a secret—a great secret—my good Martha, to tell you. However, it is only for twenty-four hours. To-morrow I am to fight. It will either be nothing, or a serious matter. I must fight; and, above all, no person must hinder me. So, my good Martha, profound secrecy!

These affairs, they tell me, rarely end badly. But such a thing may happen. In this case, Martha—and it is for that reason I write to you—you will find in my table, the drawer to the left, a note of the things which I wish you to do, and the letters I wish you to deliver. The key will be handed to you.

Be not afraid, my good Martha, or you will ruin me. I know what I risk, and I have no fear for myself. Do your utmost for your Charles, who has no one to confide in, in this case, but yourself. The moment the affair is over I will write to the parsonage. Nevertheless, if I can conceal it entirely from them, it is my most ardent wish; but in that case I will send you a messenger express. Above all, keep Louise in ignorance. I will not bid you good-bye, my good Martha; my heart would fail me.

* This third book commences towards the close of March, and the letters follow without interruption from this date till the end of July.

II.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

General.

For once, Reybaz, you are in luck. Your son-in-law is a swordsman, a brawler—no better. This morning he was brought home, pricked between the ribs; two inches lower, and his eyes were closed to this world. It was I who went to fetch the medicines; so that, on my return, I found him stretched on the bed, all the Derveys about him, and pale as a corpse. At the sight of me, he came to himself, to say to me, “Monsieur Champin, it is a mere nothing; don’t breathe a word of it yonder! In less than three days I shall be well again, and we shall spare them vexation.” “Yes, yes,” said I to him; since, as you may well imagine, wounded as he was, and before the Derveys, I had no mind to contradict him. Meanwhile, he was bleeding fast. The surgeon said it was nothing but a scratch. I wish he had it himself, the humbug! I would not ask more than two such to lay me flat in my coffin.

I went out afterwards to make inquiries. Jacquemay knew the whole story ever since yesterday evening. It was at a *soirée* at Madame Domergue’s. M. Ernest made use of an expression, your chap came up, and then, slap! a box on the ear: the rest followed. So they are quits. Only your son-in-law loses his profession by it; for it is clear that they will give him his dismiss from his theology, which he has only just entered upon.

A warning in time is worth two. Have done at once with your foundling. If you miss this opportunity, you are saddled with him for good and all. Let your Prevere talk—it is not he who will have to pay the piper.

I hear that your servant knew the whole affair beforehand, and likewise Mademoiselle Sophia Dervev, who kept it secret from her father. After that trust to this galliard,

who finds accomplices under your roof and under his own! Have done with him.

CHAMPIN.

P.S.—M. De la Cour has just left this. Not daring to appear before the Derveys, he came to inquire what news. I did not fail to tell him of the doctor's *scratch*, and it took a weight of twenty pounds off his breast.

III.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

The Parsonage.

REMIT the inclosed to the young man as soon as may be. However, to prevent anything being said against me, make yourself certain from the surgeon that the opportunity be good. I will no longer have him for my daughter; but, beyond that, God is my witness that I bear him no enmity nor wish him any harm.

On the first word I spoke to M. Prevere about the affair, he set off, and must by this time be with Charles. In this fashion I could not inform him of my withdrawing my consent. He will learn it soon enough.

REYBAZ.

IV.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

I KNOW of your misconduct. A hundred times I have told you that you would end badly. Here is the proof, and your profession gone; by consequence of which I take back my daughter from you.

REYBAZ.

V.

MARTHA TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

All, my dear young master, how you have vexed us all! So that wretch has dared nearly to kill you! Good Heavens! I tremble at the very thought! My poor Charles! if I had even time to go and take care of you. I send you, herewith, some simples which will be of use. Redard says they are sovereign. With these herbs he was healed of the cut from his scythe.

All is known here through y^eur porter, who is M. Reybaz's friend but not yours. I had kept it secret until that, but the Almighty alone knows with what trouble. M. Prevere immediately set off. In the village all are outrageous against that wretch, and it would not be well for him if he showed himself there now. As for M. Reybaz, he is very angry with you, and his looks make me tremble. A letter from him to the porter goes along with this.

But what I am heart-sorry for is this dear young lady. How shall I tell her? And to couceal it until M. Prevere's return is harder still. And yet it is M. Reybaz's orders. Already she remarks that there is something strange going on. What shall I say to her if she asks me any questions? God protect and assist us!

Allow them to take care of you, Master Charles. As I know you of old, I am afraid you will be imprudent. Will they know to give you everything you want? If it were not for mademoiselle, who may require me at any moment, you would have seen me running to you long before this.

Good-bye, my dear young master. I will not feel myself until I have seen you again.

MARTHA.

VI.

CHAMPIN TO M. ERNEST DE LA COUR.

Geneva.

FORASMUCH as being a friend of M. Reybaz, and desirous of seeing him withdraw his foot from the mire, I hereby inform you that he takes back his daughter from M. Charles. I have his letter to that effect in my hands, written and signed in black and white.

This is merely to let you know that the place is vacant—hard in truth to take, but others have been seen more impregnable, which, with time and a little assistance, have opened their gates. M. Ernest has not now to learn how to tame fathers and to ensnare young girls. Always understood that I speak here to render a service to Reybaz, who will open his eyes at last; and not because I am directed to do so, and still less to get into a scrape on account of it.

CHAMPIN.

VII.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO REYBAZ.

Geneva.

I TAKE advantage, my dear M. Reybaz, of the first leisure moment which Charles's state of health allows me, to write to you. I found him severely wounded; and what renders this state still worse, is the uneasiness which he feels respecting the light in which you may view what has passed. It is of no avail that I reiterate to him the assurance that you will be indulgent; I cannot restore that calmness which his state so imperatively requires. You must write me a few lines, my dear Reybaz, which I can read to him.

I wished, before telling you of the matter, to learn exactly how the affair took place. The following is the exact truth. Since the day on which the announcement of the mar-

riage took place, they had not seen each other. You are yourself aware how little, thenceforth, Charles thought of M. Ernest. The latter, on the contrary, was still smarting under the effects of his humiliation, and the stings of jealousy. He had forgotten neither Louise nor Charles; and everything leads me to believe that this fatal collision was wished for—nay, sought for, by him. I have many proofs of this; but one, especially, which will strike you as it did myself, is, that after having avoided all society during the entire winter, M. Ernest suddenly made his appearance again in Madame Domergue's salon. Now this was the only one in which he had already met Charles, and almost the only one where he could hope to meet him again. When he entered, a movement of surprise took place among the company; Louise's name was whispered about; and several persons who knew both M. De la Com's character and Charles's situation, augured badly of the consequences of this meeting, which they, nevertheless, looked upon as accidental. Mademoiselle Sophia Dervev, with a tact and prudence beyond her years, privately endeavoured to persuade Charles to retire. He had, in fact, conducted her to the ball, and could have found a plausible pretext for leaving it in being obliged to take her home. Charles did not follow her advice, and this is his greatest fault. But where is the young man of his age who would not, like him, have thought that it was his duty to remain—not to brave, not to affront, but to avoid appearing to fly timidly before, a rival, whose honour and loyalty he would, by that very proceeding, have attained?

In the mean time, they were both lost to view in the throng. M. Ernest affected an air of ease and gaiety, which was calculated to dispel all uneasiness in the minds of those who did not know in what a fierce and gloomy state of mind he had been for the last few months; above all, he did not appear to pay the least attention to Charles, when, by a deplorable fatality, they happened to advance both at the same instant to ask Mademoiselle Domergue to dance. The latter, a good deal agitated, and yielding to a generous and delicate feeling, accepted Charles, at the

same time promising M. Ernest her hand for the next waltz. M. Ernest replied politely, "I accept with gratitude what you have been kind enough to promise me;" then, looking at Charles with an expression at once contemptuous and mocking, he added, "Am I not well accustomed to give way before the superior merits of this gentleman?" At this cutting speech all eyes were turned on Charles, who, blushing deeply and trembling with agitation, made an effort to restrain himself. At this instant the band struck up, and, without further reply, he took his place and mingled with the dancers.

But this incident had attracted attention. M. Ernest's remark circulated from mouth to mouth; comments were passed upon the allusion it contained; and Charles's silence, interpreted differently, afforded grounds to some to praise his moderation, whilst others feared some explosion of his resentment. When the waltz was over, Charles was immediately surrounded by a group of his friends; whilst M. Ernest remained alone, in the midst of sarcastic whisperings, and opposing a mask of disdain to the looks which were directed towards him. A few minutes afterwards he followed several young men into an adjoining apartment, where, being no longer restrained by the presence of the ladies, he gave full vent to his boiling rage, and rained upon Charles a torrent of irony, abuse, and bitter pleasantry. It was at this moment that the latter entered the room, where his presence did not interrupt M. De la Cour's harangue. At the word "bastard," Charles struck him on the face, and the laws of honour—such as they are constituted by an inexorable prejudice—absolutely required what followed.

This, M. Reybaz, is the exact truth. So you see our poor Charles has been the victim of an unworthy provocation; and, if he resented an insult with anger, it was not until after having first given an example of moderation, at once most rare and most laudable. There is only one opinion about the unmanly conduct of M. Ernest, who, ashamed of his conduct, has returned secretly to his mother's chateau. Twice a messenger from him has called to ask for news of Charles; but this tardy commiseration,

after so odious an aggression, inspires me with more disgust than gratitude.

Hasten, my dear Keybaz, to reassure Charles; and if you judge him more culpable than I do myself, put off, I beseech you, for some little time, all severe reproach. Be careful, especially, to make Louise's mind easy about Charles's situation, and tell her that I will not leave him until he is perfectly recovered. To-morrow the first closing of the wound will take place; if there are any unfavourable symptoms, I will let you know.

Your affectionate

PREVERE.

VIII.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

I WATCHED my time, and delivered it. He was better; and besides, having nobody about him, it was necessary to catch the opportunity. When he inquired about you at home, and asked for news, "I have news," I replied, "but not good;" to prepare him, you understand. At the same time I handed him your letter, and he turned pale on seeing the hand-writing. Presently, having read it, he flew into a passion, then got terrified, rose up, and, notwithstanding all I could say to him, and though I told him that the bandage over his wound had given way and the blood was flowing, he minded what I said no more than a pinch of snuff, till he fell back on his bed, and there remained from weakness. Tears then came, and very luckily, otherwise I should not have known what to do.

It was at this moment that your Prevere returned, and, seeing the disorder and the letter, he restrained himself; but he was angry with you, look you; for this man wants to lead you by the nose, and to hinder you from managing your own affairs. Instead of taking your part, he cheered up the young man, promising, as it were, that nothing

should come of it; as much as to say, "Reybaz has done so and so, he shall have a scolding." And then, turning to me, "Were you ordered to deliver this letter at this moment?"—"Yes, Monsieur le Pasteur."—"Then M. Reybaz is most imprudent!"—"That may be," returned I, "but M. Reybaz has a right to do as he pleases." Then your young scapegrace stormed against you, against me, and finally begged M. Prevere not to allow me to come into his room again. I struck my colours on account of the minister, but I don't forget the remark.

Do you see clearly now? They agree like thieves at a fair, to lead you wherever they choose. We shall see this time, if, forewarned, you can keep yourself forearmed. I do not tell you to make up at once with the other; but, as for this one, set him aside and very speedily. For the rest, trust to time, which brings counsel.

Adieu, Ancient.

P.S.—The De la Cours have returned to the chateau, without drum or trumpet.

IX.

CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

No! M. Reybaz, no!—you cannot repulse me thus! No! you cannot take Louise from me now—You will not—Withdraw that fatal note!

And for what, M. Reybaz? Because I did not bear an insult patiently—because, using my most sacred right to repel an insult, I was told afterwards that honour demanded I should fight. What part of this has been my own seeking? Where have I acted wrong? Before punishing me, show me my fault.

Am I then a hothead? a brawling bully? I, who was ignorant of these barbarous laws—I, who provoked by a *cartel* (it is thus they call these challenges), found the greatest embarrassment in knowing how to conduct myself—I, who on this occasion had a sword in my hand for

the first time in my life! If I had been a swordsmail and a bully, I should not be at present stretched on this bed, from which I never wish to rise if your threat is carried into execution.

If my profession is taken from me, I will assume another instantly and with courage. What matters it to me, provided that I please you—that I devote my life to repair the grief and vexation which I have caused you unwittingly? Oh! M. Reybaz, for the last four days I have expiated my fault cruelly—fearing your grief as much as your anger—without news from Louise—haunted by the fear of causing her dangerous and painful emotion. M. Reybaz! have pity—pardon me!—do not aggravate my misfortune, and reflect that you cannot henceforth punish me without also punishing your adorable daughter.

M. Prevere, who leaves to-morrow, will bring you this letter. If you grant me your pardon, hasten to let me know, and tell me that I may write to Louise.

Your respectful and affectionate

CHARLES.

X.

CHAMPIN TO REYBAZ.

General.

YOUR Prevere is gone: a pleasant journey to him! Before he left, he gave his promises to the gallant; for his idea is, that what you have done, he will easily set aside. But I know a word or two. Did he not think to come over me, to get me to his side, against you?—Me, Champin Jean Marc, against you, Reybaz, the ancient! Nevertheless, wishing to taste the soup, I did not upset the pot, as the saying is, and so I let him talk.

It was this very morning. He came into my room, and, well knowing how his good-for-nothing had treated me before him: “I dare say,” he began at once, “that you will excuse the warmth of a lad who was under the influence of so strong a feeling, and in so unfortunate a situation: at any rate, I am come to express his sorrow

for having spoken to you in such a rude and hasty manner.”——“Monsieur le Pasteur is very good,” I replied; “but, as I am not afraid of rough language, I pay no heed to it. I have a letter to deliver, I deliver it, I am abused for the contents—ill breeding; nothing more.” (“Take that!” said I to myself.)

Then the sly fox: “You are right,” replied he; “but even in that point of view, this boy, if you but knew his history, deserves more indulgence than another. He has no parents, and all the care which I was able to bestow upon him could not supply the want of the vigilance and constant solicitude of a father, and above all, of a mother.” (I might have said to him, “Exactly so; but when one is a nobody, one does not take so high a tone;” but he continued.) “This unlucky affair threatens to throw him back into a situation well worthy of pity. However, I cannot think that the resolution of M. Reybaz is irrevocable, and *I still hope to induce him to change it.* M. Reybaz is my friend: he is one of those whom I hold in the highest esteem, (Ahem! this honey!) but he is hasty (brutal, you understand); he cannot have made allowance for everything (a simpleton, do you observe?) I venture to believe that I shall prevail upon him to return to his first intentions (that he will lead you by the nose; but wait). I shall be more certain of attaining this end, if you, Monsieur Champin, who are connected by friendship with M. Reybaz, and who have influence over his mind (my turn for the honey), if you were to second me in my efforts by representations which your heart cannot fail to dictate to you.”

He had said all. “Monsieur le Pasteur,” I replied, “has his reasons for wishing well to this lad; and, besides, everybody knows that M. Prevere is charitable. With respect to his proposal, I can say neither yes nor no; for I never meddle in other people’s affairs. Reybaz is free to act as he pleases; and where Monsieur le Pasteur cannot do it, it is not for Champin to succeed. As for the young man, I bear him no grudge, and, to prove it to Monsieur le Pasteur, I am ready to go back to him the same as before.”

Then (do you see the spy?—they know everything that I write to you), as he was not satisfied with this,—“At least,” said he to me, “I trust, Monsieur Champin, that you would be unwilling to injure this young man; and that you will not use to his prejudice the influence which you have over M. Reybaz. This, permit me to say, would be the best proof that you owe the lad no grudge, as you have just done me the favour to assure me.” “I return thanks for the advice,” I replied. Nothing more passed; it was enough to have fired the match. Away he went; good-bye to him!

You see now, Reybaz, if I told you truly, and if there is anything in the wind but to push you on to make a fool of yourself. And why? He takes the burden from his own shoulders; and, your daughter once married to him, the stain on the young man will be lessened by the one-half which she will carry. Not bad. But you!—you, Reybaz—you, having a good name and something snug, to go and saddle yourself with a foundling who has nothing—who thinks himself above you—who is a buffeter and a sworder—who is without a profession! And to give him your only child! Go to; do not retract, and you will be safe out of a filthy slough. That you said yes, once, I would overlook—but twice! A scalded cat dreads cold water. You will not play that silly trick again, or else you are no longer Reybaz, the flower of the ancients.

That your Prevere may be a good man, I don't deny: a person could afford to be one for less. The State does not feed him on deaf-nuts, and he is obliged to do something for the hundred louis which it pays him. A fine thing, truly, to be charitable with the money of other people, with the daughters of others! That is their way. If there is a rotten sheep in a parish, they will not be content till they have placed it on the back of the sound ones: they spare their own purses, and thrust their hands into yours: they give away your money, and have all the honour of it. Go to, I know them. With all that, if you touch them, they don't wait to be asked twice, to bite. The best way is to live at peace with them, but without letting them impose.

After which I went up stairs to the other.—He and M. Prevere had made it up between them, for he held out his hand to me, saying that he was sorry, and that I had only done my duty. “But consider,” said he, “only consider into what a state that frightful note must have thrown me! Impossible—impossible, Monsieur Champin, that M. Reybaz will persist—” and he began to weep. “Do not reckon too confidently on that,” said I; “Reybaz is firm; when Reybaz says anything, he is in earnest.” “I do reckon upon it, Monsieur Champin,” he then exclaimed. “I have not done any wrong—if I have, I will beg pardon of M. Reybaz—I will make reparation—I will do everything—everything—but Louise to be taken from me!—Louise!—Louise!” And then he began to toss about in his bed, sobbing heavily, and biting the bed-clothes. I could perceive that it was all a sham, and let him go on.

As I said nothing,—“M. Reybaz has promised me,” he again exclaimed—“he has promised M. Prevere. M. Reybaz has no longer any right to retract!” His eyes flashed. “Gently, young man,” said I; “it is his daughter; nobody has any business to find fault.” “I have his letter, Monsieur Champin, in which he gives her to me.” “And you have also his letter, in which he takes her away from you.” “Ah! he exclaimed, and began the same scene over again, till M. Dervev entered.

“This young man,” said I to him, “is unreasonable.” “Charles,” said the black coat,* “I thought you had more fortitude, and also more self-command. Why need you make M. Champin the confidant (take that, Champin) of what ought not to go beyond this chamber?” “He knows everything, sir—he is the friend of M. Reybaz—he has more influence over him than M. Prevere himself.” “That is not so,” said I, interrupting him; “and Reybaz can manage his affairs without anybody’s interference”—(you see what an idea they have of you). “Do you, then,” said he, “abstain from interfering—it is all I ask of you; if you promise me that, I shall be certain, from this moment, of the forgiveness of M. Reybaz.” “Young

* In allusion to his black clothes. as a clergyman.

man," said I, "Champin is not one who meddles in the affairs of others; and, besides that, it is not you who have anything to ask of him nor he to promise you. Champin goes his way; Champin is at his post; Champin is ever ready when duty calls; but, be it understood, he helps nobody to get into the mire (take that)."

"You hear him!" said he, turning to M. Dervev: "This man, this wretch—" "Charles!" said M. Dervev—"This gentleman injures me; he calumniates me; he will ruin me; because I am a—Ah! Monsieur Dervev!"—and he made believe to groan in the arms of the pastor.—"Ah! wretched creature that I am!—the scorn even of porters!—the scorn of the vilest and the most malicious of mankind!" (Take your share; for I am no better than you, and you are no better than I). Then, addressing me, "What have I done to you that you should hate me? Who are you, to come thus and add to my distress?" "Hush, hush!" said M. Dervev, "you are unjust, Charles; and in a fit of passion, which there is nothing to justify, you accuse M. Champin of a base hatred which he is incapable of feeling, even though you had given him cause for complaint. Moreover, M. Champin has nothing to do in the matter, and you know that your cause is in more powerful hands than his. Be calm; delay not your recovery by these fits of passion; and wait with patience, to enjoy afterwards with thankfulness, or to endure with fortitude. Monsieur Champin, you may retire." I retired. With those people we, humble folks, are zeroes, cyphers. There was a time when that was not the case. In '93, we should have made him dance the gavotte with the rest. In short, I retired.

I hate him? I! Reybaz—did I know him?—had I seen him? Was he not promised to your girl before I knew that there was such a foundling in the world? Had he not thrown dirty water on my cap, and massacred my cage, would I ever have dreamed, up to this moment, that the high and mighty lived in the room above mine? I hate him? Ah, vagabond of a student! I, who have watched him for your sake. That I despise him—that I wanted nothing of him, either little or much—ah! that I

can answer for; but, that I hate him? Go to,—he is an ill-natured vagabond, this son-in-law of yours—a fellow who would be a continual trouble to you. You have read what he said to me: his look spoke still more.

I write to you for your guidance, not being your friend for nothing. After that, follow your own idea. I never meddle with other people's affairs, but I see well enough who manages yours.

CHAMPIN.

XI.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

CHARLES! I know all. I wish to write to you, to raise your courage, to soothe, if I can, your sufferings; but, trembling at these frightful images, I can scarcely muster sufficient calmness to guide my pen. What! you have thus put your life in hazard? Martha tells me it was necessary. Great God! in what sort of society do you live? But I do not judge you. Can I do so? Your sufferings rend my heart; your conduct at once frightens and touches me; whilst shuddering at it, my heart absolves, nay admires, you.

It was only this evening that I learned the frightful news. Martha has just confided it to me secretly, for they are all leagued to conceal it from me. Charles! What publicity! All these people! My name mentioned! I the cause of this fatal combat! Your life threatened! Martha, however, gives me courage on this head; but when I think that I might have lost you, terror freezes on my lips the ardent prayer that I address to God for you!

That unfortunate young man! What a crowning blow to a youth so soon withered! I never thought him vengeful or ill-natured—by what blindness and fatality—and his mother, his unfortunate mother!

Every instant I would wish to be assured that your sufferings decrease; but do not attempt to let me know yourself. It is now I who wish to write to you. To-day,

however, I must stop, impatient as I am for these lines to reach you! May the tender adieu of your beloved, Charles, find you already much better—may you share the feeling with which it escapes from the heart of

Your LOUISE.

XII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

I WISHED to spare you a sad story, but I struggle in vain. If shame restrains me, shame also urges me on. My tenderness for you is without bounds, my heart is without a veil! I have no longer the right, and still less the wish, to conceal anything from you which could interest you. But what a fearful moment!—what a sight!—M. Ernest himself!

After his fatal exploit, he fled here to conceal his shame. It was soon known in the village that his mother was occupied in preparations for a tour which he was about to make in Italy. It was yesterday he was to set out; and in fact, at nine o'clock, a carriage loaded with trunks drove off towards the town. The rumour spread immediately that M. Ernest was gone. This was not the case. The carriage had preceded him to Geneva, where he was to meet it in the evening.

When I thought him gone, I felt greatly relieved, and I had no longer any feeling but one of compassion for his mother. I knew her affliction—her shame—which had alone prevented her from calling at the parsonage to sympathize with us in our trouble, and, even beforehand, I longed to see her and console her as far as it was in my power. But when, subsequently, I pictured to myself her grief and loneliness after a departure in every way so melancholy, I could not resist the desire I felt to go at once and see her. In order not to attract attention to my proceedings, I took my way by the park, where, entering the little gate, I found myself in the avenue.

I had just entered it when I saw M. Ernest a few paces before me. In the agitation into which his appearance threw me, I felt my limbs sink under me. He hastened towards me, and supported me in his arms. When my consciousness returned, his paleness, his look, his air, his disordered dress, froze me with terror. I begged, I supplicated, him to leave me—to fly! He did not move. I uttered a cry, and then he let go my hand, and, starting as it were from a dream, he protested his respect for my person. This expression filled me with horror. I turned from him to fly.

But my strength betrayed me. He then threw himself before me, and I saw him sink at my feet. Charles!—all that the wildest delirium could suggest—all the threats that despair could invent—all the insensate violence that weakness could imagine—poured in a torrent from his lips! I stood—unable to fly—unable to speak; and, the fear which I felt of being again encircled by his arms depriving me of my remaining strength, I was once more about to sink to the ground. It was then that, whether urged by fear or pity, he execrated his audacity towards me; he supplicated me to forget, to pardon his unworthy transports. At this moment a domestic appeared at the end of the avenue! I listened only to my feeling of shame. “Rise, sir!” I exclaimed, “I thought you gone. I came to console your mother, conduct me to her, and set out instantly!”

He did not utter another word. I followed him. Judge of this lady’s surprise on seeing us enter together. Tears obstructed her sight, and an enormous weight seemed to be taken from her heart. She overwhelmed me with caresses; but I stood speechless and trembling. M. Ernest kept silent. After a few moments, he approached his mother and pressed her in his arms, announcing his intention of setting out immediately; then, bowing in the direction of where I stood, he retired. I concealed from Madame De la Cour what had passed in the avenue; and, after a short visit, I left her, to fly at my utmost speed to the parsonage, where I could give free vent to my tears.

I tremble even now when tracing these lines. Will

this agitation ever leave me? I have passed a fearful night. Every moment I start with affright at the recollection of what passed. I ought, perhaps, to conceal these things from you—I could not. I felt ashamed, suffering, until I had confided it to you. Am I not your Louise? Ought I to hide the trace of this impure breath which has for a moment sullied my features? No, no, my beloved! I have done right—I feel I have. Already this confession brings back serenity to my heart.

Your LOUISE.

P.S.—I have as yet heard nothing of you. This situation cannot continue; notwithstanding the fear I am under of compromising poor Martha, I will, unless I be forestalled, speak to M. Prevere this evening.

XIII.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

IN reply to yours, I refer to my last. For the rest, you are to learn that all agree with me. It was settled between me, Louise, and M. Prevere. Notwithstanding what you say, I have a right to dispose of my daughter as I please. With regret I gave her to you, with regret I take her from you; for, in truth, to give you pain is not what I seek. Only you are hot-headed; I have always told you so, I see it, and I act from fatherly prudence.

As for wishing you ill, so far am I from it, that, provided you leave us in quiet, I assure you of my affection even more than hitherto, and shall be disposed to show it on occasion. As for the watch, having destined it for my son-in-law, you will return it to me; and to this end you will find the value inclosed herewith, in place of it.

I have no mind to argue on the remarks contained in your letter. Only I am free to admit that Louise is in trouble; but I had rather have a trouble which passes away and is gone for good, than one which lasts and

begins again. With you she would never have known peace. From your infancy I endeavoured to reform you, restive and passionate as you were, when it was your place to be humble and docile. I could make no progress, and here are the fruits. Nevertheless, you have left hands that set you a far different example from that which you follow; but the natural man is stronger, and will conquer you, if you do not conquer it.

This is what you ought to think of, if you desire to come to a good end. Now that I am freed from you, I have no animosity, secret or open; you may rely upon what I say, and I will not conceal it from you. Without father or mother as you are, it is by dint of mastering yourself that you will succeed: that pride which would be excusable in another is hurtful to you. You want but little ambition, and still more modesty; when all along I thought a trade would have suited you better than a profession. How you begin yours! And what a fine example it is for a minister, to have fought like a worthless bully! Ten years will not wash off this stain; and if you ever ascend a pulpit, with what face will you preach against brawlers, against violent men, against people who support bad arguments with blows? When youth does not bridle itself, old age is spoiled beforehand. Maggotty flower—rotten fruit. Set yourself to work.

Louise knows everything, and is conformable. She will write to you once more. It is contrary to my idea, but I was not willing on this point to constrain her. If you answer her, which I had rather you did not, it must be the last. I depend upon this, choosing rather to rely on you than to show mistrust. And, for the rest, according as you conduct yourself, so you will find me.

REYBAZ.

XIV.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

THE letter-carrier has brought your letter, but your young man has not got it yet. M. Dervev says that it shall not be delivered till he is better. His fits of passion the day before yesterday brought on the fever again, so that, for the last two days, he has been much quieter. I questioned the doctor as he came down stairs. "The wound is healed," said he; "but if this young man is not more prudent, his recovery will be tedious. He has no consideration, no caution, no docility; he disregards all directions, my trouble is thrown away upon him."

"He is young," said I. "Mark me!" replied he; "he is a blade who will give his friends a skein to unravel." And he spoke the truth.

I am as yet, therefore, in the dark as to your letter, and what it brings him. That is your affair. Meanwhile Jacquemay has it from her nephew, who is a student, that the affair has made a great stir among the black coats;* that it was discussed on Friday at their meeting, and several were of opinion that, after this scandal, he could not be admitted as a candidate for the sacred ministry. It was said that he was of a proud and violent disposition, notwithstanding the shame of his birth, so that he would be continually liable to fancy himself insulted and obliged to fight; that it was better therefore to turn him back, at the threshold, from a profession not suitable for him, than to let him enter upon it, only to have afterwards to turn him out, to his own detriment, and to the great scandal of the church. M. Dervev attempted to defend him, but all that he could gain was, that, for the present, nothing should be decided, and that the affair should stand over till their next meeting. On that side, then, things look ill.

On the other hand, all the riff-raff of the students have taken up his cause; it is who shall praise his swording

* The Assembly of the clergy.

the loudest, and who shall fight next in his turn. They come here in crowds to inquire how he is, more by token, that they bring all the dirt of the quarter to my staircase, to say nothing of the noise. Once recovered, he will give himself up more than ever to this crew. Yesterday they hooted one who dared find fault with the conduct of your young man, and they would have thrashed him had not the professor come up. This one was no other than Jacquemay's nephew, from whom I learned many other things beside.

If you had consulted a friend in time, one might have prevented you from plunging into the mire. But the others bewitched you God knows what is in your letter! I see from here your Prevere cajoling, or getting angry, just as he thinks it best for his purpose, threatening you with a falling out, making your girl cry, and you..... We shall see. At any rate, I have given you timely warning. Your girl will not fret herself to death, I'll warrant you. Pooh! Don't tell me! To say the truth, I would not have set out with putting her into the hands of that Prevere, to bring her up after his fashion and make a fine lady of her. By this means, she is more his than yours. Birds of a feather flock together. He reads books, she reads books; manners of Monsieur, manners of Mademoiselle; devotion here, devotion there; while you in your coarse coat, talking *patois* oftener than the genteel language, handling the mattock better than books, you are shoved aside, your daughter is draughted off as you would small beer, and some fine day you will find out that you are a father only to say, Amen. On the same plan, he has made the other a gentleman, when, if he must needs rear him, he would have done better to make a good mechanic of him, and even that would have been too much honour for the like of him.

By the Derveys' maid-servant, who has just gone past, I learn that he is not to have the letter till to-morrow. He was bled to-day. They do not perceive that it is the uncertainty which agitates him. For my part I should have given him the letters, for he does nothing but inquire if there is not one come for him, and in his impatience he

wished to see me. If good, it would cure him; if otherwise, he would make his uproar, and then, after this storm, fine weather. Youth is fickle; nobody dies of love.

I have given this to the letter-woman, with a commission for you; it is to know of Redard, if he has still any of his red of 1811, and at what price.

CHAMPIN.

XV.

CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

MONSIEUR REYBAZ,—

Geneva.

They have handed me your letter—since yesterday, it was in their possession. So then, Monsieur Reybaz, Louise is taken from me! You are now *freed* from me! May you be henceforth happy, and may peace accompany you!

You are the master, you say? Yes! It is in your power to destroy me—and you do destroy me; it is in your power to tear from me my last, my only hope—and you do tear it from me! You are the master? Ah! I know it too well. That is my misfortune and my misery, and has been so for a long time—since that day when I was found in M. Prevere's court-yard. There is your watch—there is your money. By what right do you send it to me? Do you assume the power also of bestowing alms upon me?

Can it be indeed true?—can it be possible? No! you have never given me your daughter—never! But to lure me on so cruelly? You have never given her to me; or, if so, what motive have you for taking her from me? No, never! That is the only true reason, that alone can explain your inexplicable cruelty. Something whispered to you “FOUNDLING!” Is not that so, Monsieur Reybaz? “FOUNDLING!” and your heart secretly gave the lie to the promises of your lips. Pitiless pride! And it is you who forbid me to be proud—who command me to bow

down before your contempt! Unfortunate, miserable, that I am!

But you do not speak the truth, Monsieur Reybaz. Agreed upon between you, Louise, and M. Prevere? No, a thousand times no! M. Prevere agree to it? Whilst you calumniate him, his heart bleeds, he groans for his unfortunate foundling. If he could hate any one, he would hate those who punish him unjustly—who sport with his destiny! M. Prevere agree to it? Ah, you do not know him, you judge of him by yourself. He? He honours foundlings; he takes them to him; he loads them with blessings; he feels for them nothing but tenderness; he has for them bowels of compassion; he makes up to them for all that the hard-hearted refuse them. M. Prevere agree to it? Ah, attempt not to think—to say—that he has ever agreed to your barbarous wishes. Like me, he yields to Louise's father, but all the while detesting his hard-heartedness and weeping over my lot. Take her—take her—but do not blaspheme against him who is goodness and compassion itself—against him whose heart you cannot even comprehend!

As for Louise—great Heavens! Is it true then that she is taken from me? Yes! she has agreed; yes! you speak the truth. I am sure of it, she obeys you without a murmur. Ah! but may you not—I cannot think of it without affright—may you not buy her submission too dearly? Monsieur Reybaz! let your heart be touched!—suspend your blow—impose upon me what trial you please. But to take your daughter from me!—it would be to destroy her along with me, and even more certainly than you would destroy me!

For her, Monsieur Reybaz, I venture to ask pardon; for the love of her, deign to listen to me! She loved me, and you know what to her are the affections of the heart—a source of joy, of life—or a source of destroying and fatal suffering. Remember those days, so lately passed, when she was so happy; come and read her letters all filled with tenderness and peace; and now?—now submissive, but still loving me tenderly—submissive, but in the inmost recesses of her heart admiring M. Prevere, blaming her

father, perhaps accusing him! What a struggle!—how will she support it? Where will she find strength, when already, in a much feebler conflict, she had almost sunk? Ah! Monsieur Reybaz, are you not then her father? This happiness which was so nigh at hand—this future, so sweet, so gentle!—so many happy hearts—and you who would have become so happy too—you, whose old age would have been sheltered by our tender care, and brightened by our happiness and gratitude!

Monsieur Reybaz, I hope still; I throw myself at your feet, with no regret but for having offended you—with no wish but to please you—humble and docile as you wish me to be—ready to bow to all your reproaches—ready to profit by all your lessons. Without father or mother, as you say. Well, I will lay aside all my pride, all my ambition, I will suffer outrage without murmuring, I will acquiesce in my destiny—only too smiling, only too happy, I confess it, if you give me back Louise.

Your affectionate

CHARLES.

XVI.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

The Parsonage.

SPARE yourself so much writing, and especially to conjecture about either one or the other. Before your letters, I had acted, upon my own counsel; so that in writing to support me, or to urge me to do what I have done, you nevertheless have not the honour of it. With that, I thank you for the trouble, seeing that you write to me out of friendship, and putting yourself in my place.

The scenes with the young man which you describe, did not surprise me. I was prepared for them, knowing him to be headstrong and unbridled once he is made to bend; more by token that when still a child, I never chastised him for his misdeeds but he struggled like a madman, receiving more hurt by his resistance than from

the stripes, and biting the ground with rage long afterwards. Whence I have always judged him to be untameable, fearing punishment, without for that refraining from fresh misdemeanours. It used to be said, 'Sense comes with years!' Here they are; and at the very outset, he deals you a box on the ear and dnels like any bully.

It is in the blood; they hunt by breed. His must have been vicious from the very first. The child of vagabonds who could abandon him on the high road, after begetting him in the woods like wild beasts, who can be surprised that along with the good in his disposition there is still some alloy of evil—a hereditary dross, a residue of the miserable ingredients proceeding from his parents? Why—just as the Redards, from father to son, are reputed to be safe to bargain with, transmitting integrity from one to another—by-the-bye, he has no more red left of 1811—as they do their vineyard—why should not one of a breed that have been beggars from father to son, transmit to his line his bad disposition either all or in part? This one began to thief when not higher than my knee, stealing the early fruit, plundering from early morning and after twilight. I was not sorry for his corrections; he has in his shoulder the small shot of the *garde champêtre*, and on his arm the mark of the teeth of the De la Cours' dog. Has he amended, restrained himself? Never. Instinct, look you, disposition of breed, natural propensity, which four generations will not correct, even supposing him to cross with honest people. And the same way in regard to that rage against punishment, that iron stiffness, that ungovernable violence—so many shoots from a bad stock. And if he has made such a beginning, though brought up in what is good by a worthy man, who can answer for what sort of an end he will make? Who knows what the wretches were who deserted him? Who knows even what end they came to themselves?

Why, in this parish, have the Rosets, from father to son, had an instinct for mole-catching, so that, Pierre Roset having deceased without male issue, the parish has been obliged to do without a mole-catcher? Why is M. Ernest disorderly? His father was not a saint or he

would be living still. Would you like to have another proof which is more to the purpose? It is at Cartigny. They had there a foundling from the hospital, who was brought up to field labour and rough work. Without any other masters than the day labourers, he spoke good language, had the look of a gentleman and the ideas too, more by token that he had command over the other boys, so that if any of them did wrong by the master, he reprov'd him for it. Cleanly in his person, on Sundays instead of drinking, he read in books, and more particularly, he was the only one in the parish who sang so well at church that he might have risen to be precentor. His name was Prelaz of Bourdigny. One fine day there comes a carriage to take him away, and the whole village runs to see, without being much surprised nevertheless, so worthy did they consider him. He had been claimed by his initials; he was the child of a German nobleman! So that all that he had done was from instinct, or to speak more properly, the breed, beginning with music, for which the Germans bear the bell.

These ideas I have ever entertained them, more by token that Theresa had no others, and Louise herself, though brought up like a young lady, is Theresa in every line. But from religion, as I have told you, and not to rebel against the wish of M. Prevere, as also to give Providence time to manifest itself, I had given in to promise Louise to this young man, inasmuch as he was amended and pressing on to his calling in the straight road. I felt neither regret nor glory in this, certain that I meant well from my heart when I was agreeable, as, in like manner, I meant well when I refused; whence I have kept myself free, and still more so than if I had never given in, since, obstinacy and rancour being my natural defects, people but for that might say that I had given way to them.

When, therefore, this catastrophe happened, I had neither glory to lay down nor regret to take up. I had neither scruple towards M. Prevere, whom I had satisfied; nor remorse of religion, having beforehand obeyed it in the sincerity of my heart, nor doubt of Providence, which, for

having suffered it to take its own course, has given me a warning loud enough for me to hear it with both ears. Still more, being accustomed to consult the memory of my dear and honoured wife—more by token that it was by this practice I had succeeded best in conquering my grudge against the young man, seeing that Theresa was compassionate and without hatred—I judged how this catastrophe would have terrified her, and that she would not for anything in the world have given her Louise to a brawler, without reckoning his birth, and that it is clear that, without property, without calling, he conducts himself wholly contrary to that one which he has chosen, barring up the way against himself at the very outset. Louise was the only obstacle left, but which cramped without stopping me, judging that he must be a bad father, who, for the sake of a small evil, neglects to prevent a greater, and engages the whole future for fear of afflicting the present. So, on Wednesday—more by token that the rain stopped the labour—I strolled all day by myself to deliberate at my ease; then on my return I wrote my note to Charles, enclosed in yours, without having since had reason to turn aside from my design, which, on the contrary, everything since, and especially your letters, and what they tell me, have confirmed me in.

So, leaving Louise till afterwards, I waited for M. Prevère's return. It was on Saturday; he knew therefore of my letter to Charles, in which I take back my daughter. I went to see him in his room, where nothing passed of what you foretold, Champin, inasmuch as if M. Prevère is weak and too good-natured, he never was subtle and crafty to shift blame from himself upon others. In that you are mistaken, and I would believe you malicious before I would him a good apostle; by which I mean a man of fair words rather than good actions. He endeavoured at first to alarm me, respecting my resolution being taken too hastily. I let him say his say. He spoke of the young man, to the end that he might excite my pity. I said that as to his position, I knew it by heart, more by token that I was ready to take part in his maintenance, and to relieve him of one third of the cost. Then he spoke to me about

Louise, wishing to point out how dangerous it would be for her to break off this attachment. I said that, as for Louise, I dreaded on the contrary the continuance rather than the rupture of this attachment; that with me, her father, this was the principal motive; and that for the rest, in what regarded responsibility, I would take that on myself alone, which was but just, looking on it as my first task.

Perceiving me thus resolute, and armed at all points, he said: "I think you are too severe, Monsieur Reybaz. I fear that you will have reason to repent your precipitation. I would fain shake your convictions, for your own happiness and for that of Louise, independently of all that which I wish my poor Charles. But if you compel me to desist from offering you advice, if this be your final resolution as a father, you leave me no alternative but to submit to it. I had wished—" and he stopped short, from the grief which he felt. I took his hand: "I am sure and certain, Monsieur Prevere," said I to him, "that you always wished for our happiness. We differ only in counsel, not in intention. My chiefest pain is that I cannot follow your advice; but it is very true that in this case it is as a father that I express my idea, and if it be false, it is not for want of deliberation, insomuch that I cannot change it in any way."—"So much the worse," he replied: "your idea is a fatal one; I have a deep conviction of it. It is too late. If you persist, I shall not thwart you—but I should fail in the friendship which I feel for you, Monsieur Reybaz, if I did not let you know that I think your resolution even more dangerous than it is harsh and cruel." I had no mind to contradict him, and we parted coldly.

Champin, slander not this pastor; I know him, you do not. What he would persuade me to do, he would do himself; and I am as certain that if he had a daughter to give to his Charles, he would give her to him, as I am that I am writing this. Granted, with you, that this is no reason why I should give mine to this hot-head; but speak not ill of this pastor, nor of his salary, which goes to the unfortunate, doing nothing more than passing

through his hands. It was by seeing how he acts, that I, naturally close and straitened in patrimony, have learned not to be too saving, as I was inclined thereto, and as is the failing of all us country-folk. And when you say that, giving the money of others, they have all the honour, you are as far from truth, when so speaking of this pastor, as earth from heaven; for never was living soul less proud and more modest in regard of the benefits which he spreads around. Of him it may be said, more than of any other whatsoever, that "his right hand knoweth not what his left doeth." This man has his failings, being of the seed of Adam; but it is certain that they are such as others would account their best qualities, just as the cast-off clothes of the rich make Sunday finery for us humble folk.

In fact, during now fifty-six years that I have observed the actions of men, I find that, where sin abounds, it is in the too great love of self, as also in swerving in the inmost parts of the heart from truth and sincerity, which leads to those deceits that we everywhere behold, and that pollute the world. Take away these two things, and the mercy of God would have less to do. But it is in this that our nature is corrupt, and that, without the grace of God, we should all be heirs of perdition, knowing the law and observing it so little. Well! Champin, if it be not a sin to say so, I would assert that, in both those articles, M. Prevere is ready to appear, and to be saved by his own merits; and that those of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would be an ornament to him rather than necessary for his entering into paradise. If he loves any one, it is not himself; if he dispenses benefits and peace, it is not to himself; if he labours with mind and body, if he tills, if he sows, it is for the unfortunate, be sure, Champin, and without taking anything from the fortunate. And, as for swerving from truth and sincerity, what need has he to do so, accounting himself nothing and having no interest but yours? Only, carrying these virtues too far, when, to say the truth, he lives among men and not among angels, he may abuse them; and, his part being once given to him, he may ill perform that of others.

There are duties above even beneficence. Out of compassion, he wishes to give my Louise to his young man; but is that to say that I, having to answer for the happiness of my daughter, my duty ought not to prevail over even his charity?

Under his care, what, think you, would an ordinary lad have become? Well! this one has not profited by it in the least. The mildness of his master he has changed into violence; his humility he has made pride; his kindness, malice; his respect for others, annoyance to others; thus transforming all the good into bad, except that he is not stingy either with his own money or that of another, but without discernment; more by token that one day, having dressed up in his new clothes a young urchin whom he saw, left naked in a ditch by malefactors, he came back to the parsonage and put on his old ones, which he had better have given him. As for Louise, granted, with you, that I regret she is not a peasant girl, which would be better for her; but, to say that she has not learned from M. Prevere all the good that he desired to impart to her, as well for the heart as for the head, would be to do her wrong. Like a plant taken out of a good soil, she has grown up, under the watering of heaven, into flowers and fragrance; but the other, an ill weed, has thrown out thorns and prickles. What is this to say but that, sprung from different breeds, the blood impels them to opposite courses; that, although having the same examples to profit by, instinct urges them to different propensities! And where, Champin, would be the justice of God, who punishes even to the third and the fourth generation, if, from the first, the breed was sound and pure?

It is, therefore, without grudge—God is my witness—without grudge against M. Prevere, that I act contrary to his idea; it is without grudge, too, against this lad, and ready to do him good, even though he insults me in his letter for taking from him my Louise, the daughter of my Theresa, who by the death of her mother is committed to my care, until I shall render an account to whomsoever has a right to it. I act uprightly, according to

the best of my knowledge; not that I rate it higher than that of a worthy pastor, but because, in matters that concern one's own child, he who begot her may, without wronging anybody, believe himself more enlightened, and prefer following his own judgment according to circumstances.

After which I went to Louise. I am glad to say, since her last, she has mended, having got back her colour, and also her cheerfulness and the interest she took in everything. However, Champin, I could not hide from myself that she loves this lad, were it only from goodness of heart, and seeing that M. Prevere is so fond of him; but she does not love him as girls love their sweethearts—I mean that she is not in love, nor made to be so, either with him or with any other. Her modesty itself would prevent it: not that she comes near such ideas, but, long beforehand, she stops in fear; so I have often thought that she is not made for marriage, more by token that such as remained single seemed ever well pleasing to her. If ever she comes to such, she will have so much to get over that it will be far worse than even Theresa, who for above a month, reckoning from the wedding, shed tears, and lived shut up, liking better to be alone than in my company. It is not therefore depriving her of a husband that would move her greatly; and I would lay a wager into the bargain that it would be a relief to her trouble to take from her all expectation of marriage, provided she were allowed to continue the attachment on the same footing as hitherto. On this last point alone I have really vexed her.

Finding her alone then, on Wednesday, at the Acacias, I said to her, “Louise, if I wish to act for your good, shall I find you submissive and reasonable?” But she, as if suspecting something, turned pale, and, trembling all over, begged me to come back to the parsonage, towards which she ran and I followed.

She was in her room. Her tears flowed in streams. “I would have waited, but she began: “Before you speak to me, father, mercy—mercy for Charles!” And she fell at my knees, taking my hands in hers. “Louise,” I said to

her (for I was resolved, on account of her own good),—
“Louise, if I wish to act as I have judged best for you, shall I find you submissive and reasonable?” “Submissive,” she said, “always!—at the cost of my life—but take pity on him, father!” Desiring to shorten this agitation, which is hurtful for her, “Louise!” I said again more firmly, “I am your father; shall I find you submissive?” She then rose, her tears stopped all at once, and, seating herself before me, she remained motionless; in such sort that I hesitated to proceed, having, indeed, her submission, but not having her yes. And as I looked as if waiting, in a few moments, as if suddenly awakened, “I am submissive to you, my father,” said she.

“I did not doubt it,” I replied. “Louise is Louise. Here is the most difficult part done. Reason will do the rest. There is no question about punishment, and consequently nor of forgiveness either. I wish the young man well. With my purse I am ready to aid him. Desert him?—there is no such intention. He shall be assisted to do well, and directed towards another profession which may suit him better. He shall not be left to himself till once he is well settled, and in the way to come to a good and fitting end. The only thing is, that, refusing Louise to him in marriage, all intercourse between them must cease. For, whoever wills the end wills the means. It is on this point that I require your submission.”

She had, as it were, a shudder and a trembling. “Spare me, father!” she murmured: “have pity on me! I had surmounted—and here is a new struggle—shall I have strength sufficient!—” Then, throwing herself again at my feet, “Ah, mercy for myself!—for myself alone, father!” and again she burst into tears. Wherefore, seeing her in this state, I went away, renouncing to constrain her.

M. Prevere, having heard her moans from his room, came down stairs at this moment to her: then he came and returned to the charge upon me. “It is useless, Monsieur le Pasteur,” said I, “since I no longer ask anything from her. I have done my task, wishing to prevent this union, which I should regard as a great misfortune; but I know

that it is now my part to submit. Tell Louise that she is my child, that I am her father, and that, as such, she has my blessing."

He said nothing more, and I, going about my work—more by token that I set to count the bundles of vine twigs, which were unloading in the court—kept down in that way the vehemence with which I was moved. Evening coming on, we sat down to supper, M. Prevere at one side, the little one facing me, who ate nothing, but seemed more calm. At the moment of bidding good night, M. Prevere spoke, as nearly as possible, to this effect:—

"I speak to you, Monsieur Reybaz, in Louise's place; she has requested me to do so, because, after such a shock, she doubts her strength, and wishes to avoid an emotion which exhausts it and which afflicts you. Louise is obedient to you, Monsieur Reybaz—she has ever been so, even when imploring your mercy. She questions neither your understanding nor your authority, and she could not enjoy any happiness separate from yours, and separate from her first duty, which is to obey you. Her affection, above all, commands her to conform to your wishes, which she knows to be dictated solely by your tenderness for her. She will conform therefore most faithfully to them, complying at the same time with all that our experience shall advise for mitigating her regret and raising up her strength; as also soliciting the sole permission to write to Charles once more, to inform him, herself, of the separation which you desire. I need not tell you, my old friend," he added, "that I, for my part, shall follow the example set me by your daughter; and that, whilst I keep up my connexion with my protégé, I shall respect all your views in the new line of conduct that is marked out for me."

After he had said this, we embraced in silence. Only I recommended Louise not to sit up after this fatigue, presuming that she might possibly be going to write.

This is the way, Champin, in which all has been arranged; in such fashion that, if it please God, my

daughter is saved, and I am relieved from a sore spot which I have felt ever since I knew this lad. All this for yourself and for no person besides; so bridle your tongue, which I know to be unruly!

REYLAZ.

XVII.

M. DERVEY TO M. PREVERE.

Geneva.

I AM grieved to be obliged to put you to any inconvenience, my dear colleague, but if you could come and spend two or three days in town, your presence here would be most desirable. Our young friend is very ill, and the physician does not conceal from us that his case is a serious one. The fever had abated, when the last letter which we gave him brought it back with double force. This evening he has been slightly delirious; and, at the present moment, this state is giving way to a sort of drowsy torpor.

What a vexatious affair this duel is! And what grief and embarrassment do I not foresee as the consequence of this grave imprudence! You are not aware perhaps, my dear colleague, that his entrance as a theological student has been postponed, notwithstanding all I could say to prevent this measure being adopted. It was on last Friday that the deliberation took place; and, although there was every disposition to excuse the young man, who has inspired a feeling of interest in all those who know him, it was judged absolutely necessary to make this sacrifice, for fear of establishing, by too great indulgence, an injurious precedent; and it must be agreed that the annoying publicity which this affair has had, justifies, to a certain extent, this decision, which I make you aware of with real chagrin.

As I am unwilling to delay the departure of my letter, I postpone more ample details till I have the pleasure of seeing you in person.

Your affectionate

DERVEY.

XVIII.

M. PREVERE TO M. DERVEY.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,

The Parsonage.

Considerations of importance prevent me from setting out immediately, but I shall be in town to-morrow. Until I take your place by the bedside of Charles, do me the kindness not to leave him. In the critical state in which he is at present, I can trust no one but you.

May Providence watch over this young boy—so worthy to be loved, notwithstanding his faults, and yet so unfortunate, so abandoned, that if God, at this moment, would take him to Himself, it would be doubtless a mark of His divine goodness!

Do not pity me, my dear colleague; much rather let me entreat your pardon for all the trouble and embarrassment which this tedious illness causes you, and for the grief and vexation which it certainly must occasion your kind heart. Or rather, let us unite in blessing our Master, who grants us an occasion for exercising our charity.

Let your porter inform no person here of Charles's state; it would only be aggravating my painful situation, already sufficiently miserable in being detained here for some hours longer.

The decision which you mention overturns hopes which were very dear to me; it is, nevertheless, less painful now, since others, dearer still, have been destroyed. Receive the expression of my most sincere friendship.

PREVERE.

XIX.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

I SHALL reply to yours by-and-by. These lines for your guidance. M. Dervey has just left my lodge, after enjoining me not to write to you that the young man is *very ill, extremely ill*. Very well done, Monsieur Dervey.

Do you comprehend the affair? It is all arranged between the young man and him, well knowing in their own minds that I, whom they misdoubt, will not fail out of opposition to write to you very speedily that the young man is at the point of death. Then you retract, and the young man recovers.

* The fact is that he is doing better, and is sleeping at this moment like a top. No later than this evening, he ran riot against you. Hold yourself therefore as warned, and be sure, if he was really worse, I am not here to conceal it from you.

Farewell, ancient.

P.S.—Hold! an inclosure for you. A man who can write is not dead yet. It is for your Martha; he wrote it in bed, unknown to M. Dervev, begging the servant to get me to dispatch it to the parsonage. I will answer for it, this letter is folded by one in his sound mind. No means of spying a word. Deliver it, then, and try to find out.

XX.

CHARLES TO MARTHA.

MARTHA,

Geneva.

Does M. Prevere abandon me too? Oh! how I long to see him—for an instant only! Shall I see him no more?—nor you, Martha? May the Almighty take me to himself!

If you could inform M. Prevere—Oh, how I am suffering, Martha,—take every care of her! How much I have to say!

I would like to see M. Prevere—tell him I wish to see him—beg of him, Martha, to come. Adieu.

XXI.

JACQUES* TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Verrèze—in the Valley of Aosta.

As Madame requested me, I send her news of Master, which will be the more welcome that I fancy Madame has not yet had any, Master having had no heart to write—being all out of sorts, otherwise he would have given me commands to take to the post-office. I took the liberty of speaking to him on the subject, but, without saying against it, he sent none any more than before.

To tell the truth, for the first day or two we had enough to do to get on; and at a place in these mountains, where we stopped three days, it was a hole where there was not in the whole country side a drop of ink, nor a pen, except what was still in the fowls; besides that they had none even of them, the country being cold, and growing little grain, by reason of the bad weather, which commences soon and ends late, on account of the mountains. A regular country of wolves! And, besides, our cabaret at Chevron is a fine inn beside the den where we stopped those three days, without to say the truth my being well able to tell why. But Master not speaking, I dare not ask him any questions; and so I did nothing but whistle before the door, and give a helping hand to the people of the place, whom I taught how to rub down a horse. It was straw they wanted.

After which, the bad weather coming on, we set out again, but I would not for a good deal go over the same ground a second time. It was by the mountain of St. Bernard, where they keep an inn on the very top, fifteen clergymen, and dogs who would snap up ours at a mouthful. There is nothing to pay, so I took a glass extra on account of the cold, which is smart enough, as with us at the end of December, without counting the snow which had us as white as a sheet. The place being full of people, Master would set out again, half an hour

* M. Ernest's servant.

after, and from that we came in two days to this village where we have been staying now nearly three weeks.

This is all up to the present. Master is neither well nor ill, but, for certain, not light-hearted: more by token that all this time he has never said one word to me; and if I begin to chat, and tell him the news I have picked up in the neighbourhood, he bids me to go and talk elsewhere, caring for nothing, good, bad, or indifferent.

As Madame was so particular that I was to tell her all, saving her presence I will tell her that what I have taken most to heart is to see how master is got so steady all at once, which, when in good health, he was not much inclined to, having always a word or two to say to the girls, and, for the young ladies, fine talk, which made them very fond of him. "These times now, he does not look the way they are on, keeping out of the way of every person, and of the young ladies too; though there is one here now who is the wonder of Italy, but he has not once turned an eye upon her.

Some Englishwomen sent him off from St. Maurice as if it was a den of wild beasts—and handsome too they were, more by token that one of them had a good deal the look of Mademoiselle Louiso at the parsonage.

For my part, I make bold to say to Madame, that I never would have thought that having given an ill-looking scoundrel a prick in the side, and without doing much harm either, could have changed a man to this; and, from a gay lively young man, to turn him as dark-looking as the door of a dungeon. But we shall see more about it when we get to Turin. He rises very early in the morning, and makes off to a haunted-looking old building on the top of a rock, just for all the world, as one would say, like the tower of Gosse at Saleve; and he passes the whole day looking down at the ground, quite fierce, and sooner speaking to the beasts grazing about him than to me when I climb up sometimes to take a peep at him. In the evening he comes back to dinner, and then goes to bed, to begin the same thing over again in the morning. The snow is still on the mountains, and I wish it was on the plain too, to drive us out of this hole, where a man wears

away his life doing nothing at all; for, save and except the inn, and the charcoal-burners, who are as black as moles and always working among the wood, there is no more society than on the palm of my hand. And, besides all, they gabble a sort of language which the Devil himself would not understand, and mostly I am at my wits' end to know what they mean.

Madame will do me a kindness if she tells father I am quite well, and that in these parts the wine is to be had for nothing at all, if they only knew how to look after it.

I am Madame's most respectful servant,

JACQUES.

XXII.

M. PREVERE TO MARTHA.

Geneva.

As I promised you, my dear Martha, I sit down to give you intelligence of your Charles. I will not conceal from you that I found him very ill and much changed. He was lying in a sort of torpid sleep when I entered his chamber, and then, the fever agitating him, he pronounced my name once or twice. Soon afterwards, opening his eyes, he recognised me, not without some difficulty; then a flood of tears streamed from his eyes, and the silent caresses which he bestowed upon me were most grateful to my heart, while they seemed to give him some solace and comfort.

I have never left him since. Indeed, he seized my hand at the commencement of the interview, as if to retain me by his bedside. The ruin of his dearest hopes—so suddenly and so irretrievably destroyed—has struck him with a feeling of abandonment and loneliness, and it is this form which his delirium has taken. He demanded repeatedly that they would show me to him; and, in his ravings, he fancied that the persons about him (who, by the way, showed him the most affectionate attention) concealed my death from him. I attribute to this idea

having haunted him, the good effects which my presence appeared to have on him. But he is wretchedly thin, and the melancholy of his look; usually so gay and cheerful, grieves me to the soul.

My dear Martha, this child who owes you so much, and whom you have watched over with an affection so meritorious and so amiable, has now only us two left, of all those who share his heart, whom he can love without restraint. No others save us two are associated with the recollections, the griefs, and the joys of his childhood; none save us with this feeling, of such early growth, so strong, and so full of happiness—which he must now tear from his heart, if, in doing so, it does not destroy him. The world, on which he is entering, has little time to bestow on the unfortunate; and his position and birth are not calculated to find him many friends. Thus his heart, so tender and affectionate, will turn towards us, the only remains of that shipwreck in which his future welfare, which I had thought safe in port, was cast away. You will not fail him then my good Martha; and be not afraid that I say this as if to guard against my Charles being forsaken by you. I honour you too much for that; I know too well what gentle warmth of piety exists in your modest heart; and I may be permitted to do you the justice of saying here, that, in the task which I undertook, of restoring by my exertions a little comfort to a poor sufferer stripped of every blessing—it was in my good Martha that I met the most constant, the most unpretending, and in my eyes the most precious, support and assistance.

But, my dear Martha, it requires so much prudence in well doing—so much vigilance and care to attain to it—that, if I have to warn you, it is against the impulses of your own good-heartedness, far rather than against an abandonment of which I know you are incapable. It is for this reason, that, whilst a calm sleep refreshes our unfortunate Charles, I employ these leisure moments to converse with you for a little while upon his situation, which you, more than any other person, might aggravate by the least imprudence.

You know all that has passed, and I shall not, therefore, go back upon the subject. But I dread some error of your judgment with regard to the persons who play a part in these sad events; and I am led to fear that your fidelity—not knowing to which of them to turn, amidst this conflict of wishes and influences—may commit some lapse which would be fatal to those very persons to whom your sympathies lean. Well, Martha, what I would impress upon you is, that this fidelity you owe, above all, to M. Reybaz, not only because he deserves it in the fullest and most entire extent, but because he has a right to it before every other person—before even myself, since I found you in his service and engaged by him, when I came to settle at the parsonage.

Let this, therefore, my good Martha, be the rule of your actions, whatever promptings you may be subjected to from your own goodness of heart, for that is the only enemy which I have to combat with in you. Although never losing sight of this rule, let your sympathies however be free, and since it is the joy of the Christian to love the unhappy, the suffering, the disinherited—love them, my good Martha, love them dearly. Love sanctifies; charity is the distinguishing mark of those who have part in the Gospel; it is faith, it is life—the true and only sign by which God recognises his children!

But refuse justice to no person, shut not your heart against any; and if M. Reybaz appears to you harsh towards two children whom you love, be careful, Martha, not to give way lightly to too severe a judgment. Whatever be his motives, they are sacred—for he is a father; they are worthy of respect—for M. Reybaz is a man of rare uprightness; for, if he is mistaken in his views—if, at times, prejudices influence him,—he acts, at least, according to his conviction, and conformably to what he looks upon as the interests of his daughter, who is, most certainly, to him the dearest object on earth. From all these considerations, he deserves that all should look upon him with friendship, should act openly by him, and should feel well disposed towards him, but, especially, you, Martha, to whom he was a kind master—just, often generous, and at

all times grateful for the motherly care, which, with honourable confidence, he entrusted you to exercise over his daughter.

Let these, therefore, be the sentiments which fill your heart, and the principles which regulate all your proceedings in the difficult position in which, as well as myself, you find yourself placed, and in which perhaps, even more than I, you are exposed to be drawn aside from the straight path which it is given us to follow. All that could be tried openly to turn M. Reybaz from his resolution, I have tried in vain; it would be now shameful and criminal to attempt the accomplishment of this purpose by secret influences, by those doubtful ways on which sincere and scrupulous minds never enter. It would be acting unworthily to cherish in his daughter's, or in Charles's breast, hopes which have been withdrawn by him who has a right to withdraw them. It would be dangerous, as well as culpable, to favour a clandestine correspondence, if ever our poor Charles, led astray by the suggestions of his grief-stricken heart, should seek in such a remedy for his sorrows.

This, my dear Martha, is what I wished to say to you. Within this limit, which we shall not outstep, let us console these afflicted ones; let us share in their grief; let us implore for them the help of a kind Providence; but, above all, let us have confidence in His ways, however dark they may seem to our weak eyes, and let us feel certain that, beyond these passing vicissitudes, which seem to us so hard to be borne, His justice and goodness exist for ever. They watch over the just, they prepare for them happiness in the mansions of eternity, where there is joy for the afflicted, recompense for the faithful—for each the portion to which his misfortunes or his virtues have entitled him.

Your affectionate

PREVERE.

XXIII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

It is allowed me to write to you once more. I will endeavour to-day to collect my strength; I wish to employ it all in order to speak to you with calmness. You will write to me also, I request it of you; but I beseech you beforehand to make allowance for the state which I am in; I beseech you to respect my father, to support and sustain his daughter. Everything overwhelms, everything terrifies me, even those lines which I expect to receive from you. Why cannot I feel assured beforehand that courage, moderation, or, if not, at least pity, will dictate them to your pen!

I have nothing to relate to you. To the expression of a will which is sacred to me, I have thought it my duty to yield. I obey, I wish to obey; and it is my duty, Charles, to declare it to you here. But if, after that, it is any consolation to you to know at what price, I will tell you; what are my wishes, I will tell you also. I know not how to feign, and constraint, which was ever odious to me, would be here out of place.

I shall obey without reserve, without murmuring. I love, I revere my father—my father, whose breast is filled with the deepest tenderness for me—my father, so sincere, so venerable, and, in all things, seeking only my happiness. I shall obey him without loving him less for the suffering which he causes me. And, moreover, shall I confess it? in the midst of this agitation, in the midst of this darkness into which I am plunged, it is a consolation—it is, as it were, a light to my path—to find that, at the same time that he has broken my heart, my heart remains faithful to him. By this I know that I have as yet kept the line of duty. Happy indeed am I, that I have not swerved from it; happy to have learned from such worthy guides to make choice, among so many different paths, of that which conducts to duty and to life!

I shall obey, Charles, I wish to obey. Far from me

be all feigned docility, all deceitful remorse. I shall sink under the burden, I shall die, rather than betray the just confidence of the worthy father whom Providence has given me. But, shall I be alone? Do I deceive myself? No! Charles, Charles himself, the friend and pupil of M. Prevere, Charles, who has gained my esteem and tenderness, Charles will sustain, will support me; and if I do not separate from him, he will not any more separate from me, he will be my brother, and, united with me in a common respect for the author of my days, he will bow also without a murmur.

This, dear friend, is what I hope, this is, what I trust in, this alone can soothe my sufferings. My heart, henceforth strengthened and reassured, may speak to you without reserve.

That I love you, Charles, that it is to you that I have voluntarily and with delight committed my destiny and my heart, I need not now tell you. But if, from a natural constraint, or from the effect of the anxieties of a timid mind like mine, I have often appeared to you cold or reserved, let the grief and discouragement which now overwhelm me, be a sad testimony to you of the feelings which I cherished, of the force of that attachment which must now be broken, of the rapture with which I saw my life united to yours, and my alarms find their surest refuge in your protection! Ah, Charles, let us turn away our eyes from these withered joys. Why cannot I efface all traces of them? To what end are these backward glances towards the past? If hope is taken away, at least let us not aggravate our regrets; let me rather, before leaving this subject for ever, disclose to you the inmost recesses of my heart.

We shall never belong to each other; our destinies are henceforth separated, and, for many long years at least, no relation, no correspondence must exist between us. It is to that decision I have subscribed, it is to that decision, I will faithfully submit. But, beyond that, I remain free; or rather, beyond that, my will is powerless; and if my heart has been given to you, my friend, it can be given only once. As well as my esteem, my tenderest

affection is yours; it ever accompanies you; it will follow you wherever your career is fixed; it will find its sweetest joy in learning that you meet with the success and happiness of which you are so worthy, and which Providence, I doubt not, reserves for you, if to the talents and good qualities which distinguish you, you unite courage and resignation to temper the too lively impetuosity of your character.

I feel embarrassed how to reveal to you all my thoughts. Nevertheless, it must be done—the minutes are precious. Charles, listen to me! It is my heart which speaks to you, not without effort, but with sincerity. My wish is that you should choose, one day or other, another companion. The severest blow which could now reach me, would be to know that, from the misfortune of having known me, your life should henceforth be deprived of that which alone can gild it with happiness and peace—of that which alone can make up for so many blessings of which you have been deprived, and which you will find nowhere else than in the sweets of mutual affection.

If you repulse this idea for ever—if, by a fatal blindness, you form rash vows—if you condemn yourself, by this means, to vegetate in a condition always false and miserable—I wish you to learn beforehand, that not only will you poison the life of her who is dear to you, but you will have less title to her esteem. Yes, Charles! for what would such conduct testify, if not that, refusing to submit along with her, and like her, you still nourished hopes which to her are forbidden? What would such conduct prove, if not your desire to manifest to all that you are the victim of her father; to cast back upon him the odious responsibility of your misfortune; and, in remaining solitary and unhappy, to afflict, without remedy and without motive, to plunge into constant torment, her who already reproaches herself with so much bitterness for having troubled the course of your destiny?

I shall not attempt here to present to you a thousand other considerations, which spring up under my pen. I shall not attempt to reason, to discuss; it is not the proper moment either for you or myself; and in limiting myself

to expressing the value I attach to this request, I have spoken, I trust and believe, the language which will most readily find its way to your heart. I shall add but one prayer. Do not reply to me on this subject. In your first impulse you might perhaps do so in a spirit which would be unfitting. You would run the risk, Charles—and I shudder at the thought—of compromising your future career; you would add the last blow to my breaking heart! My wish is now known to you; I commit it to your breast; I found on it my last and only consolation. I have nothing to add. May time and Providence incline your heart to accomplish it!

You have chosen, for my sake especially, the career of the sacred ministry, and in expressing to you for the last time how deeply I was touched by that determination, I take the liberty of exhorting you to remain faithful to it, and to surmount the obstacles which temporarily impede your entrance upon it. No career could be more honourable; but, Charles, may I be permitted, in my anxiety for your welfare, to tell you that no other appears to me to be so suitable both to your character and to your peculiar situation. Pardon me, inexperienced as I am, for venturing to give you this advice; but, in that sacred profession, the vehemence of your feelings, which, although always upright and generous, are sometimes imprudent, will be tempered and purified; in such sort that this impetuosity—the vehemence of which leads those who love you to tremble for the result—when consecrated to the service of our Divine master, and to the practice of the christian virtues, will redound to His glory and the good of your fellow-creatures. Above all, Charles, to whom should an orphan such as you give himself, sooner than to Him who loves the orphan even more than he loves others? Where else should he seek his refuge? Where could he better dispense with those advantages which the world esteems, and which fate has refused to him, than in that career where the lowest is the most exalted: where birth, rank, and fortune are nothing, because charity and virtue are everything; where it is given to all, but to you especially, who are distinguished by the goodness of your heart and

by your talents, to attain to the first rank, and to shine with that gentle radiance which the world cannot tarnish, because it is a ray from on high—which it cannot take away because it has not given it—which it honours because it is gentle and beneficent?

Weigh these motives well, Charles, and accede to my request; if so, I shall find my mind easier. I intended at one time to ask you to send back my letters, and to return yours; but I abandon my purpose. To sacrifices already bitter, let us not add others which are illusory. If it is true that our destinies are henceforth irrevocably separated, it is not less so that never—no never!—shall we be strangers to each other. Then why this restitution—deceiving sign to which our feelings give the lie? Ah! doubtless, if, in destroying these lines, we could annihilate the past, restore to our hearts peace and joy, dissipate that gloomy cloud which lowers above our heads and veils the horizon from our view—And then!—even then—no! For, what price, Charles, could I place on those happy years, which are now ended—on the joys, the affections, of which you were at once the source and object—which could make up, in any degree, for their loss? I love their memory better, I cherish their fading traces more, than I should a present, cloudless, but without you, unblessed by the tender affection which I feel for you and which I will feel till my latest sigh.

Charles, we must part! In telling you so, I cannot repress the emotions which swell my heart—the effort is too much for me—tears blind my eyes. We must part for ever!—we must break that tie which filled my whole existence! Adieu! I cannot proceed.—May God support me, and may he be ever present with you!

It is the last wish of your unfortunate and tenderly attached

LOUISE.

XXIV.

MARTHA TO M. PREVERE.

The Parsonage.

I THANK Monsieur le Pasteur from my heart for the letter with which he has honoured me, and in which his too great kindness has confused me much. Monsieur le Pasteur may reckon that although I failed once in my duty to him, I was too sorry for it to do so a second time, or to behave otherwise than he has told me. Moreover, Monsieur le Pasteur knows well also that Mamselle Louise will not fail, sweet angel that she is!—and may God preserve me to assist her! As for M. Charles, without meaning ill, he will not leave me at peace unless I satisfy him by giving him now and again some news of Mamselle Louise; and, if I understand Monsieur le Pasteur rightly, so that I confine myself to doing that, it will not be failing in my duty to M. Reybaz, or else I would rather tell him beforehand that I could not refuse so little a favour to so sweet a young gentleman. Although I be a servant, I cannot get rid of all affection.

How I cried to see him so ill, the poor dear child! My heart bled to think that any other was to look after him instead of me; and, even at the present time, I would ask Monsieur le Pasteur's permission to run to him, if I could leave Mamselle Louise. But, weak and miserable as she is, it would be a shame. Ah! my dear sir, I fear from my heart that all this will end badly, and far differently from what M. Reybaz imagines. For she hides her grief before him, and he does not see one half of the mischief. What she took up at first she has lost again; her colour is going, she never eats a morsel, nor looks what she used to be. Not to speak of her loving M. Charles better than a brother, she reproaches herself with being the cause of his mishap, and she has a thousand fears, a thousand regrets, about what will become of him, so happy and so well placed as he was, and so miserable and forsaken as he is now on all sides. "Poor Charles!" she repeats, when M. Reybaz is not present; then tears

follow, which break down her strength at the same time that her sorrow is wearing her away. What can I do, when already I am readier to weep with her myself than to contradict her? As Monsieur le Pasteur says, we must look to Providence, and I do not spare my prayers; but unless restoring these children to each other—these children who loved each other so dearly, and who will never do any good without one another—I fear something bad will come of it.

M. Reybaz gave me a hint that I was to go off with our young lady, for a month or two, to some place or other at a distance. It is to draw her thoughts away and prevent her thinking of what has happened. I told him to see and do for the best, wishing to gain time to write to you; for I would not for all the world leave Master alone when he might need me and me not near him; and, as for Mamselle Louise, I have no need to ask her to be right sure that she would rather see me near him than near herself. I beg Monsieur le Pasteur, therefore, to put himself in my place, in order to advise me for the best, according as he may think most fitting for poor Charles. If he is well enough, Monsieur le Pasteur will do me a pleasure by remembering his Martha to him, and telling him how heart-sorry she is for his state.

M. Reybaz does not know this young lad; and, if Monsieur le Pasteur will permit me to say so, he has never known him, otherwise he would have taken kindly to him instead of always setting his face against him. If he only took a few apples—and it was almost never for himself—he saw nothing in him but a vagabond; if he gave anything away, or to the poor, he called him a spendthrift. When he would not bear harsh treatment, he called him a good-for-nothing fellow; and if he was quiet, he was then a lazy sluggard who would never earn his bread. Thus taking him always at cross purposes, he always found him cross-grained; when, to tell the truth, all the rest of us—without reckoning Monsieur le Pasteur—cherished him as the apple of our eye; which made M. Reybaz to look upon him with anger, as if we had spoiled him. It is that

which has caused all the ill, and blinded M. Reybaz, so that he runs the risk, at the present time, of destroying a worthy young man, without saving his daughter. Let Monsieur le Pasteur only say if he ever found him dishonest, spendthrift, vagabond, or even unteachable. Let Monsieur le Pasteur say if—besides that, even in his folly, there was always something good—he ever saw a lad of his age with so kind a heart to every one, and at all times: so ready to leap for joy at any act of goodness, as well as to fly into a rage against evil-doers; so anxious to oblige, so delighted to confer pleasure—so much so, that in the village they say everything is dull and heartless now-a-days, and no longer as it used to be. So, even suppose there was no other reason, were it only on account of such sweetness and such goodness, I never will console myself that he did not get Mamselle Louise, without speaking of myself, your humble servant, who, in losing him, loses all.

I ask pardon of Monsieur le Pasteur for writing so long a letter, and beg him to receive the affectionate reverence of his faithful servant,

MARTHA.

XXV.

REYBAZ TO CHAMPIN.

The Parsonage.

I HAVE already told you that Redard has no more of his red of 1811, but he offers you some of '14 at twenty-one florins, delivered at your house. A cask could not hurt you; it is a wine that will keep in the cellar as long as you please, and, besides, made with care and not liable to waste. He would bring it you on Saturday, as he is going to town for a copy of his register of baptism, by reason of a lawsuit which they have with their cousins about eight frthorn of vines. It is this same wine. Being acquainted with the affair, I give it against the others, as I did last year when they took me for their umpire. You would do all the better to have it, as the almanac foretells scarcely

anything but wet for the coming season, and the public-houses have already raised the price a sou per pot.

Since this affair is settled, I feel light of heart, and go about my work more freely than I have done for perhaps these two years, continually in dread of misfortune as I was, and limping from that thorn. My last explained to you how I am in rule and free from reproaches, I mean on my own part, inasmuch as I fear those more than all the others. There remains Louise who might give me uneasiness; but, thanks to God, all goes well on that side. I find her better than heretofore, saving the appetite, which will come round as the warm weather approaches. Martha judges otherwise, but that is from prejudice in favour of the other. However, not wishing to do anything in this matter which could turn to my reproach, I have sent for the doctor, him of Dardagny, who is staying at Pierrettes. I studied whether or no to have one from town, and, though somewhat dearer, I should not have minded that; but, all things duly weighed, I preferred this one, who is better skilled in the country diseases, and who cured Dussaut's wife of a liver complaint, which would have taken her off in two days only for a drug which he knew the secret of.

He has seen Louise, but without talking to her; this by my desire, seeing that I know her ideas, and that no doctor ever would come near her but would give her the fever merely by asking her questions. Only, on seeing us together, she blushed from head to foot. When she had left us, I told him that she was anxious by nature, and somewhat by circumstances, without telling him all, and that her appetite was not according to my fancy. I then asked by way of trying him, how he would treat St. Anthony's fire—(I had it myself)—“With mulled wine,” said he. Whereby I saw that he understands his business.

In fact, your town doctors, they can talk, but often that is all. They have sent for one to the De la Cours, whom they pay a crown a visit, besides travelling expenses, and without the disorder being weakened for so many visits, so much money, and so many words. So I said right: “If that lady pays for words, she does not pay enough; if it is for the benefit she gets, she pays too much by

a crown." There are callings in which the tongue is loose; there are others in which it is nailed to the roof of the mouth. Go and talk to the folks who are in the government offices; you will find them mutes who grudge you a word, though they are paid for answering you; but I never yet saw a doctor whose tongue was ill hung, so true it is that it counts for much in their business. I had great difficulty to clap a rein on this one's, to the end that he might listen to me instead of prating himself right and left. Did he not want to tell me what was my daughter's complaint, and not me to tell him!

Be that as it may, he gave it as his opinion that she ought to be removed, and indeed I had already been thinking of it myself, in order to divert her mind from this place, where many things have gone rather against her for some time past. He told me that there is a place which would be sovereign for her, by reason of the air which is soft and at the same time fresh, which gives one an appetite; without counting that the fir-trees which are in those parts, have an odour which, mixed with the wind, sets the chest to rights, and makes the inside as smooth as velvet. He declares that they send thither from Geneva all who are lame of one limb or the other, and that all is made as good as new again in less than no time. He also gave me a drug in case of need, but, to tell the truth, I don't like the colour; besides which, the girl is stiff on that point, and will not taste a drop of their physic, unless I begin to get angry with her.

This place is at the back of Mount Salève, which we see from here down beyond the Rhone: they call it Mornex. There are houses where people are taken in to board. I write to the end that you may inform yourself upon this head, and tell me the price, letting them know, as is right, that it is for a young lady who will not be severe on the kitchen, and a maid-servant, who does not pay master's price. There is nobody else but myself, who eat the ordinary measure and not a whit more. Two rooms will be sufficient for us: be they ever so plain we shall be content, provided they are dry, and that the air of the fir-trees meets the nose. We shall bring our own linen,

seeing that in this respect there is nothing like lying in one's own sheets, and not in such as have been slept in by so many sickly and ailing people.

Inform yourself therefore. And also, if there should be a small cottage where we could be by ourselves, I should not object, bringing Martha with us, who would cook. It is always cheaper. One eats what they please, and one does not pay for what they leave, as in those inns where they take pleasure in crowding so many dishes one on the top of the other, that you could not eat them in four days; and then you have to pay as if you had devoured them all in a quarter of an hour. For my part, when I see such abundance, it takes away my hunger by the mere sight of it; and I wish for the omelette or the bit of salt meat of our larder, where you are served according to your appetite, and where the purse is emptied only just as the stomach is filled.

Write to me as soon as you can what you have learned. The most difficult part is already done, namely, to find a substitute for myself at the parsonage; upon which I have deliberated a long time between Ramus and Brelaz, without either of them pleasing me too well. Ramus, a good singer in his time, has a mere thread of a voice now, by reason of the chest which is worn out; so that, to hold the note, he is constrained to shake his noddle, at the same time striking his hip with his right fist; and he has great difficulty into the bargain to keep up with the villagers, who, for want of being guided, straggle and go off at a gallop, so that they are at the end of the verse before he has well reached the middle. Hence may arise scandal, for which I should be very sorry. As for Brelaz, the voice is strong but wanting moderation, and he trolls you a psalm just like a drinking-song; more by token that he permits himself to make flourishes in the intervals between the lines, having nothing respectful in the method, or serious in the tone, and thinking only of the pleasure of tickling the gullet. So the organ cannot keep up with him, and the peasants exerting themselves too much, there follows a boisterous and irreverent singing, which would be painful to M. Prevere. I have nevertheless

made choice of him after reasoning with him and telling him that I shall inform myself how he behaves.

The fact is, to be a precentor, I mean a good precentor, is what many aim at but few reach the mark. Precentor is not a singer, or else go and get me those stage warblers, who will run you all through the gamut and far beyond. The voice tells indeed by the tone, but little by its flourishes: and in my mind, if even harsh but true, simple and not tricked out, it is more fitting for this pious music. With eight or ten notes, good and full, you have merchandise sufficient for all the psalms; the rest consists in the look, in the gravity, and in reverence for the place and for the Lord, in taking care to temper the congregation to your mind and keep it in hand, and also in the habit of conducting. I much fear that mine, on coming out of Brelaz's hands, will be restive and disorderly. That grieves me, but what is to be done? 'Never lend your horse,' say the cavaliers. But is that to say that in case you cannot refuse him without doing hurt, they would hold you to the proverb?

M. Prevere delays long to return; still, I shall not leave till he comes back. Martha says that it is the hurt of the young man which keeps him; for my part, I think he would be quite as well here, where the affairs of the parsonage suffer. More by token that he who supplied his place last Sunday is a probationer, who has not yet learned his business, though he has zeal, and only too much of it. After the preaching, the peasants said to one another, and very rightly, "This one must put water in his wine. When his beard is grown, he will learn to lecture his people more softly, and not to find fault with folk who have seen more than he has." With that, if he were to preach here often, he would for all that do hurt to M. Prevere, in that after this strict one he would appear too mild; after this proud one, too humble; for the peasants soon take a liking to those who rate them soundly.

'What will he do with Charles?' How much better it would have been for this lad had he been hardly brought up, and not got his own way so much. That is what I would have done; but all were against me, and

M. Prevere to begin with, who always treated him with kindness—excusing, having patience, talking when he should have punished, and so failing in his task, which was to tame him as soon as he saw in him a violent and vicious disposition. But it was stronger than he, and from instinct he loved this worthless fellow as though he had been an angel from heaven. Seeing that he was fond of him, the others were fond of him too; he found flatterers everywhere, in Martha and the rest, and then all went to the bad, as I foretold a hundred times. Farewell; here is dinner-time: do not forget my commission.

REYBAZ.

XXVI.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

A LETTER from your daughter came the other day addressed to this blade. Not knowing whether you had allowed it, and also to do you a service, if need be, I peeped into it, and spied a few words which seemed to me not to smell well; so that, for your guidance, be upon your guard as much as is needful. Love is a cunning knave, and with him no saint can stand. I read some love speeches, tolerably flaming, I can assure you; and then she hopes that he will marry with an amiable partner. Now, we have been young ourselves; we know the way of these poor things. If I understand anything about the matter, this means that she puts off. Nobody will ever make me believe that a girl advises her lover to marry another.

But only wait! You will soon receive a letter from M. Prevere, which is to do great things. The story is this. Yesterday I carried your daughter's to him, to deliver to the young man; having left it, I went back to my lodge, where, at the window, one can hear all that passes in the room of your late son-in-law. I waited for some noise—not a word. But, presently, M. Prevere and M. Dervev come to their own window to consult in a low tone, so that I was a third in the party, as it were.

They talked a long time about the young man, about you, about all this misery, the whole of which they throw on your shoulders, and not a wrinkle in the fit. "You know nothing about it; this blade is a little saint; and, then, what is to become of him?"

In fact, they know not what to do. M. Dervev advised means, and what has confirmed me about your Louise's letter, is, that he was of opinion that they ought not to hold themselves as beaten, but to leave it to time, and soften down the grief of the young people in leaving them the hope that you will change your mind. It is true that here your Prevere, who is not so crooked as the other, stopped him, saying that in no fashion would he lend himself to it. Then the other had the boldness to answer: "That is carrying your scruples too far; let us at least, without saying anything to the young folks, cherish the hope of seeing an end put to their sorrows; *how many circumstances may happen!* besides, *when they come of age*, M. Reybaz will be a little more *tractable*." You understand, Reybaz! *How many circumstances may happen!* as much as to say, you may kick the bucket, and very glad we would be of it! And if you did not kick the bucket, that certain *respectful summonses* will be addressed to you.

I did not hear M. Prevere's answer. Just then there came a knock at my door. It was a letter from Martha for M. Prevere, which young Legrand, who was coming to market, undertook to deliver. This Martha is their tool, and she will act the go-between as much as they please. If I were in your place, I should not keep this jade, who received Charles at her mother's when he scampered off, and who knew of the duel the first, and in time to prevent it, without saying a word to you, so entirely is she sold to the vagabond. In brief, as they had done talking, I went up stairs to deliver Martha's letter to them, not without spying under the cover for expressions concerning you, and jeremiades about your daughter, who, if one would believe her, has not two days to live, exhausted as she is by tears and sapped with grief. The regular story. My opinion is, that there is an

understanding between them, without affirming for certain however, not having read the whole.

On going down again to my post, I listened. I caught nothing but scraps, but, as for the end of their discourse, I have it pat. They had read Martha's letter, prettily turned, as it appeared to me. "This good woman loves that boy," said Prevere; "she has adopted him in her heart. Her remarks are just, though severe—I shall write. What she says about Louise fully decides me. Perhaps M. Reybaz will not hold out against so terrible a picture." Thereupon the other withdrew, to leave him to write. So you are well warned of the plot; hold firm and let come what will!

CHAMPIN, JEAN MARC.

P.S.—Yours is this instant handed me. I see by it that all is going on well. I have already told you that nobody dies of love. I shall go and inform myself point by point, and that without loss of time, for you ought to be far off when this one recovers.

XXVII.

M. PREVERE TO M. REYBAZ.

MY DEAR MONSIEUR REYBAZ,

General.

I think it my duty to write these lines to you, not to recur directly to what has been settled between us relative to these young people, but to submit to your consideration a few reflections, and in order that I may not be liable subsequently to the terrible regret of not having enlightened you, according to the best of my ability, while it was yet time.

I do not intend in this case, my dear Reybaz, to appeal to your conscience—I know that it is at peace; for in the exercise which you make of your authority as a father, I am certain of the uprightness of your intentions. Nor do I invoke your humanity in favour of this unfortunate boy,

whose situation nevertheless is such that I would without regret see the Almighty take him to himself. It is only right and just that you should be left at liberty to decide upon the lot of your daughter, according to your prerogative, and according to your convictions. In laying before you those which I entertain, I do not for a moment believe that they are less liable to error than your own; therefore, whatever part you may take—whatever may be the sorrow or joy which Providence reserves for me in the destiny of these two children—whilst blessing its decrees, I shall always render open homage to the feelings which have guided you in this important resolution.

But, my dear Reybaz, what I ought not to conceal from you are my fears respecting Louise. They are real—they are pressing. I behold this young girl engaged in a struggle, where, in truth, the victory is not doubtful—where obedience will triumph over attachment—where duty will overcome inclination. But at what price? It is on this point that gloomy thoughts assail me; it is with respect to it that I ask myself with affright whether we are not sowing the seeds of a long and irremediable affliction.

I now speak to you plainly, without concealing my opinion; for it is my design, if it has any shadow of foundation, to place it before you as a salutary warning; and, in doing so, my friendship for you guides me even more than my affection for Louise. In fact, the misery, the despair of your whole future life is here concerned, and the more I am aware what a tender father you are, the more do I shudder at the idea that your resolution may be fatal to your child, and that a frightful error may be revealed to you when it is too late.

But, my dear Reybaz, how shut out this idea? Louise, notwithstanding the graces which adorn her—notwithstanding that courage which deceives one respecting her strength—is a frail creature. In a thousand traits, and, unfortunately, in this, she resembles her mother, who died in the flower of her age. As in her case, a delicate frame encloses a soul anxious, sensitive, passionate; and, still more, a soul courageous in the combat, devoted in the sacrifice—a soul for whom it is neces-

sary at all hazards to shun this combat, to spare this sacrifice.

Remember her childhood. What difficulty there was in bringing her through it—what little hope we had even of preserving this tiny creature, even then so winning from an indescribable charm of sadness and melancholy which adorned her features, which beamed in her eyes, and sat on her lips, although still mute. But the cheerful pursuits and sports of this age, the cares of Martha, and the society of another child of her own age, breathed new life into this frail existence, and we blessed together the goodness of God who thus changed our alarms into happy hopes.

Remember how short were these intervals of peace for Louise, and at how early an age her heart, too soon sensitive, was a prey to suffering and alarm. Recall to mind the tears which she shed, when only nine years of age, on happening to discover that Charles had neither a father nor mother who could love him and press him in their arms! Recollect what alarm she felt for the imprudence which he might commit, and what grief afterwards when he was punished. Recall to mind all these traits, and how at each of these precocious sorrows the sweet child turned pale, lost all her joyousness, shook all our hopes. Even then, Monsieur Reybaz, it was dangerous to attempt to deprive her of the society of her dear young friend; and if since then her frame is no doubt strengthened, how much more are her affections strengthened too!

Remember amidst what conflicting emotions, what storms, and what a shock to her whole existence, she passed from childhood to youth—what deep feelings of sensibility, of shame, of agitation, shook her frame, and made us doubt if she would ever emerge from the crisis without perilous suffering. We conversed together on this subject—together we did our best to shield this delicate plant from every cutting blast, from every scorching ray, from every hurtful influence of the atmosphere. Shall we now act together for the purpose of exposing her to them anew?

Lastly, recall to mind how even the fulfilment of a wish which, in my eyes at least, was calculated to secure her repose and her happiness, was not for her heart an un-

troubled joy; and that a serious attack of illness taught us, not a year ago, at what price, in the case of this too sensitive girl, is purchased every sudden change in, as well as every obstruction to, the current of her affections. Nevertheless, this crisis was short, and as we had, in reality, met her wishes, gratified her desire, and assured to her heart a future which was closely linked to the past, every day displayed her to our eyes calmer and happier, whilst a gaiety of manner which we had never observed in her before, sprang up to temper her winning melancholy. A clearer bloom tinged her cheek, a brighter glance shone from her eyes, a tranquil gaiety revealed itself in all she said, and her happiness seemed henceforth assured. It was in the bosom of this felicity that the blow struck her! In the face of this warning, what are we to expect from the future? Ah! Monsieur Reybaz, I cannot repress my emotion, and, in the certainty which I feel that we are about to endanger not only the peace but even the life of her who is so dear to us, I can only pray to God that in His goodness he may turn from us this cup!

Reflect, then, once more, my old and dear friend, reflect, I conjure you, if such fears, were they even in some degree exaggerated, do not demand your most serious attention, if they do not justify fully in your eyes a return to our first project. Moreover, do not deceive yourself about Louise; she does not display all the suffering to which she is a prey. Martha knows more on this subject than we do. But if it had been the will of God that, in place of Martha, your worthy wife had been the witness of the secret anguish of her daughter, think you, Monsieur Reybaz, that she would have held out against a sight so worthy of pity? Do you think that this tender mother, whose memory you revere, would have hesitated, in the face of the danger which I warn you of—that she would not have joined me at this moment, in conjuring you to make every sacrifice to such well-founded alarms? For my part, I cannot doubt it; and it is for this reason that I beseech—that I adjure you, Monsieur Reybaz, to reflect seriously on what you do, to weigh well the responsibility which you are about to encounter, and to retrace your

steps instantly, if you think that in the considerations I have presented to you there is even a shadow of truth. It is the advice which, in concluding, is given to you by your true friend,

P'REVERE.

XXVIII.

JACQUES TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Ferrèze—in the Valley of Aosta.

HERE are first weeks and then months passed away, without, to say the truth, us having ever budged from this. Having ventured to say as much to Master, who, house for house, would have been far better to stay at home—he took my advice badly, so that I will not meddle more with the matter. A regular country of wolves this; and, into the bargain, they won't keep quiet, and rather than scrape and scratch the snow up on the mountains, they come down and growl about the house in such a fashion, that, saving in broad light and in company, I never quit the house, where, they say, these beasts do not enter, no matter how dark night it is. For which reason I blame Master, who goes into the ravines all the same, wandering over the woods, and coming in late, while I am out of my wits with terror for fear he has been devoured by these wild animals. Let Madame add to that all these charcoal-burners, who sit drinking in the lower room, as black as soot, and quarrelling and fighting at all hours of the day; and, where we would give a blow of a fist, they will whip you out their knives. By the same token that when I see them getting warm on it, I feel the terrors of death upon me, and my dinner sticks in my gullet. But what sits deepest upon me is the host, who has advised me not to say that I am a protestant, and that if I would go to mass two or three times it would be all the better; that otherwise they would be furious and would play you some ill turn or other which perhaps you would never recover. I went off as fast as my legs would carry me; but, look

you, when I came back he told me that, having commenced, I must go on, or else that I would be in more danger than ever. I go to mass then, and it is a great sin for me, but the moment I get out of this den, I will repent so heartily that the good God will forgive me. Nevertheless, if Madame would be kind enough to keep this to herself I would be very glad.

To tell no lies, Master is every day sadder and sadder, and now you would hardly know him. I have tried to make myself wise about it, and in my mind it is not so much about this rib or two that he has broken, as something else which touches him in the heart. To act faithful by Madame, I take a peep or two into his writings, knowing how to read, thanks be to God and Lancaster. Here, save and except the curate, and the host to keep his accounts, they don't know a letter, from which comes this devil's gabbling which they speak to each other, and at mass. As for schools, good-bye to them: once born they are taught nothing until they are old enough for the charcoal, when they are sent to the woods and live like savages through the summer. There they earn some money which they spend in the winter drinking and fighting, and, so as they go to confession, nothing is said. The host told me indeed, that to kill a heretic was no more to them than drinking a glass of water; and that they would only go the straighter to paradise for it, if the clergyman gave them absolution, which he seldom refuses, getting from them alms, eggs, and all sorts of victuals. It is his dues.

I take a peep then at his writings, at which he spends ever so much time. They are scraps of letters, most of them to Madame, but barely begun; others to M. Reybaz, of the parsonage; and one to Mamselle Louise. This last is a love-letter, or I know nothing of the matter, more by token that he says that he "*will die with her features present before his eyes, and her memory present in his heart.*" and other flaming things in which he accuses himself and asks her pardon. And then, in the same page, all sorts of scribbling, little round o's, and two large blots; as one might say, a man writing more for the sake of writing than for sending, and, between two remarks,

scrawling on the margin. There is one of these blots just like a gosling, one would say a blackbird mounting guard. In the letters to Madame, it is in like manner doleful sayings respecting this young lady, saying that "*the farther he is removed from her, the more unhappy he is,*" and that "*the less worthy he feels of her, the more he loves her,*" and other love-speeches, which show plain enough why he stays in this hole, fearing to go further. And speaking of this, I make bold to say that if it was not for the bother of crossing the mountain of St. Bernard again, I am certain that Madame would have seen us before this, master not being able to bear any country except where Mamselle Louise is.

Madame sees then, that I have discovered the whole affair. It is for love that master is wrong in his head; and it is for love of Mamselle Louise—a fine lively young girl, but one would never have thought that Master would marry such, being brought up in the chateau, and being in the way of finding better, among so many rich ladies who would snatch at him with the four fingers and thumb. For all that, in my mind this Mamselle Louise is very charming. She must be, for certain, to have bewitched two in this way. To make one's sweethearts fight, and then take the conqueror; that is the way they used to do in old times. To tell the truth, I think the end of it must be to bring them together, and that Madame will make nothing by crossing Master in his fancy, which in my mind, he will never give over. Granted that it would be too much honour for M. Reybaz; but then it would be better for Master to marry below him than to fall into black thoughts like Chevrot, who being low in heart about the Ravys' daughter, let himself slide down the moraine, and was never seen more. And here it is not moraines that are wanting if the fancy would come into his head.

One thing more I wish to tell Madame, which is, that Master only spoke to me once, and it was on this subject, seeing that I had received a letter from my father, giving me news of the parsonage. "There," said I to him, "is M. Reybaz as happy as a king," (he pricked up his ears) "his

daughter is left to him." Then he questioned me in all sorts of fashions, and even said he wished to read the letter; and there where my father says that it was agreed upon among them all and by M. Charles also, and that, after all, Mamselle Louise would not be put to her shifts to find a husband come of better sort, he was out of his wits with joy; so that he wished to set out that moment to return to the parsonage. But while I was already packing up the trunks, he came to reflect, and then got sad; and at last got so low upon it, that when I came to tell him that all was ready, he sent me to the devil about my business. Then I unpacked the trunks, and went on in the old fashion. What vexed me most was to go back to mass, where, if, at the present time, I forgot to go once, I would not have a chance to be alive in a month. All my fear is, that we may be here at the festival, and that I will have to communicate and go in procession. Already the host is speaking of confession.

I enclose one for my father, which Madame will oblige me to let him have. If Master would receive such a letter from Madame as she would please to send, it would not be ill, and would get us out of this den.

I remain Madame's most devoted servant,

JACQUES.

XXIX.

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

JACQUES TO HIS FATHER.

Ferrière—in the Valley of Aosta.

GOOD-MORROW to you all, and happy may you be that you are snug at home! For me, I am fast here from weariness and fright among these amphibious animals. Nothing but lazy scoundrels, never cleaned no more than a wooden shoe, and who have no reasons to give but knives—more by token that if you could find me a good place, and that St. Bernard would melt a little, I would go back again most willingly.

The mountains here are fine and big but not handsome.

Once through our canton I have seen nothing but ugly dens. The mountains are all ice and rocks, with a few fields here and there; and here, where the land would be good enough, they grow nothing but charcoal, and their vines all go to leaves for want of poles. God help them! They are as yellow and withered as an old boot, and, into the bargain, they drink like savages and make as much noise as a flock of wild geese.

Master is as cross as a bear; it is enough to make one wish him at the devil a hundred times a day, and I don't miss to do so. He is in a terrible way about this little chit of the parsonage—nothing less, if you please, but wishing to marry her, and for my part, I don't see what hinders it when the other is out of the way. See and pick up some news about the matter; it might, perhaps, get us out of this; and be very civil with Mamselle, in case the farm should be vacant, or that through this marriage I might have a chance of getting a good berth. You will do me a pleasure by going to pay your duty at the chateau, where you can say that M. Ernest is most happy to have me, and that I feel much honoured, seeing that I am not working for ungrateful people; and besides that I was always known for being attached to my masters, belonging to the place, and always serving them faithfully. You will be sure to go, and you will hand the letter to Madame, well closed, to save the postage. It costs twenty-six sous, on account of the snow which they cross in a sledge, and the wolves. There are more lost than arrive safe.

Best wishes to all, and remember me to Jeanette. I often think of her. However, if she keeps company with any lad in the village, give me warning of it, that I may send her adrift. More by token, her parents burden their lands so much that it will soon be scarcely worth my while. If they borrow another son upon it, I will look out in a different quarter, not wishing to marry a mortgage and nothing more. Go and pay your duty to M. Prevere, and give a good account of me to him; tell him as how the mass here goes against my stomach, without reckoning the capuchins who go about

barefooted, with beards as long as a he-goat. At the same time, give my respects to Father Reybaz, and I trust he will remember me if anything should turn up.

JACQUES.

XXX.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO ERNEST.

The Parsonage.

YOUR long silence renders me uneasy, my dear son, and you afflict me in keeping your engagements so badly. How do you think I can support your absence, in the state of ignorance in which you leave me about everything concerning you? Since your note from Bex, I have no intelligence of you, and I am reduced to have recourse to Jacques' father, to know, through him, that at least you are not prevented from writing by sickness.

I know the cause of your silence, my dear child, but this cause does not justify you in my eyes. On the contrary, you make a bad return for my tenderness towards you when you do not entrust me with your grief. You know well, Ernest, that in spite of my repugnance to see you contract a union so little suitable to your fortune and your rank. I waived all scruples on this head, that I abandoned projects which I had much at heart, and that it was not my fault that your wishes were not fulfilled. Will you repay my tenderness with indifference, and shall I see you, when stricken by misfortune, withdraw yourself from my society, and refuse to entrust me with sufferings which are mine not less than yours? At least relieve me from the anguish in which I am now plunged, and let a few lines from you, my dear child, restore me to that peace of mind which I have not tasted since your sad departure.

You promised me to visit several towns in Italy, and to endeavour to distract your thoughts; and yet I learn that you have shut yourself up in a village in the valley of Aosta. This is ill-done, Ernest, and you do not spare,

as you ought to do, your mother's tears. What can I hope, or rather, what ought I not to fear, when I see you treating your promises with contempt, pampering your grief, consuming your days in useless regrets, and falling back voluntarily into those transports which so much terrify me? Oh, how I groan in spirit, my dear child, both for your fate and for my own! How weak are you, and how unable am I to guide you! What a frightful, what an irreparable loss was your father's death for both of us! Do not, my Ernest, I conjure you, aggravate this misfortune! Exert some command over yourself, and time, which is against you only so long as you give way to these regrets, will assist you the moment you attempt to do your duty.

Alas! misfortune has visited this neighbourhood, and in that parsonage round which your thoughts wander, joy no longer exists. I have not seen any one belonging to it, but I know what passes there. M. Reybaz has repeated his refusal, notwithstanding all the influence which M. Prevere has over him, and the two young lovers are now separated. Mademoiselle Louise is about to set out for Mornex, where her father accompanies her. It is hoped that this change of place will relieve her mind, and will raise her from that state of prostration in which these events have plunged her. As for Charles, although he soon recovered from his wound, he was subsequently attacked by a serious malady from which he is only now recovering. What will become of this young man, thus deceived and abandoned! Think, Ernest, how much more unhappy he is than you; for this happiness which you covet more than all the world besides—the affection, the preference, the hand of this sweet girl—were all his, and they are now taken from him, leaving him nothing in the world. He has still, to be sure, the worthy M. Prevere; but you, Ernest, you have a mother who loves you dearly. Why do you thus abandon her?

I beseech you, my dear son, write to me what is passing in your heart. If I cannot accomplish your wishes, I can at least soothe your sufferings. But, above all, quit the place you are in, and let the first letters I receive from

you be dated from Turin. It is impossible but that amusement, the lapse of time, and the sight of new and interesting objects, must succeed in restoring calm to your breast. You are aware that I am ready to rejoin you at any moment; but what I would never forgive would be your harbouring the idea of concealing from me anything which might require my presence beside you. Adieu, my dear son. Receive the expression of my tender affection, and hasten to relieve me from the anguish in which your silence plunges me.

JULIA DE LA COUR.

XXXI.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

YOU will find herewith inclosed all the particulars which you ask me. I flatter myself you will prefer the cottage, on account of the price in the first place, and your liberty in the next. The prices of the boarding-houses are out of all reason, just as if money was to be picked up in the streets; setting aside that there you are along with a parcel of folk who think that they do you a great honour by allowing you to eat off the same cloth. If you agree to the terms, you can enter on Wednesday. The firs of Eseri are in front and to windward. You will smell the firs, Reybaz, at your ease. Your doctor smacks of humbug with his firs; but then, as the saying is, faith works wonders. So much the better for them who have it. But, take my advice, be firm; that is the best physic, and in less than a month's time your daughter will be as well as ever. If you halt or stumble, it is not the firs that will set her to rights.

The other begins to mend, and if you do not make haste, you run the risk of meeting him in the street, as you pass through. M. Prevere intended to return: but as the patient's strength mends, so does his vexation; and not to leave him to storm, he has decided to put off his

departure. Another reason why you should be gone before he gets back to lecture you. You must have received his bomb, and I hope with firm foot, knowing by me how they had arranged their batteries. Let me know all that happens.

Your Martha passed through our town yesterday, and she saw M. Prevere, if not the patient. Watch me well that spy, or get her to your side, without which she will play you some scurvy trick. M. Prevere inquired if there was not a letter from you for him. D'ye see! He reckons already on the success of his.

Farewell, Ancient.

XXXII.

MARTHA TO M. PREVERE.

The Parsonage.

As Monsieur le Pasteur charged me, on my return to the parsonage I asked M. Reybaz if he had received from him, the last day or two, a letter requiring an answer. He answered me, yes, and that he would reply in time and place. However, he seemed mistrustful of my question, and, on this head, did not spare me some reproaches; making me, but in a very hard fashion, the same recommendation that Monsieur le Pasteur did, touching that I should be faithful to him. Especially he took it ill that, when going to town on his business respecting this journey, I went to see M. Charles, without telling him about it before or since. For, to say the truth, save and except these questions, I would have kept the thing to myself and without thinking any ill.

But all this is nothing, if Monsieur le Pasteur will allow me to tell him what happened afterwards, and from which I have not yet recovered. After having quitted M. Reybaz, I returned to our young lady, with the intention of comforting her about M. Charles, whom she is uneasy about this long time past, on account of his silence,

and on account of your long stay with him. But the moment that she suspected that I had seen himself, her trouble was so great, that, not being able to keep it under, she shut the door in the inside, as if for fear of being surprised by her father, from whom she keeps hid the state of her mind, when I only wish that he could just see it as I do. And set in case it would give him pain, I can see nothing but good that would come of it.

When the door was shut: "My good Martha," said she, "what have you to tell me?" Then I arranged my discourse so as to keep her easy, telling her that I found him better than I had hoped for, and tolerably calm for the present. But, as I am a bad hand at feigning, and as my words did not come naturally to me, she was only the more terrified at seeing me make a secret about such a weighty matter. "Tell me all, my good Martha!" she said again; "the truth would frighten me less than this mystery!"

Then, being much in the same mind myself, I told her what a way he was in on seeing me; how he covered me with kisses and tears, only to think that I had come from his Louise; and, that for only telling him that she was in good health, but very unhappy, he let me go all at once to pray the good God to support her, to preserve her: asking only that—nothing on earth but that—nothing for himself, who ought never to have been born! For the rest, Monsieur le Pasteur was present up to this point, and as it was then that he left us alone, I will tell him what happened afterwards more at length than I did to Mamselle Louise, asking pardon of Monsieur le Pasteur if I was too open with her; for it is so hard to act a part with such a sweet angel, that I would rather hide everything from her, and keep away from her altogether, than to stay near her and to deceive her.

As soon as Monsieur le Pasteur was gone, M. Charles asked me a thousand questions about Mamselle Louise, and I saw from this that Monsieur le Pasteur had not yet judged it right to hand him our dear young lady's letter. "It is the expectation of this letter," said he, "that supports me. Louise promised it—she will write—I will once

more read the lines which her hand has traced—Martha! I thirst for these lines—and yet I fear to receive them; for, after them there is nothing—nothing more!” He kept silent for a few minutes. “Why did not God take me to himself? Why live—why ever be born, when all these blessings were to be torn from me? Martha! only think that Louise loved me—that Louise was given to me—that she was happy at it—that I was steeped to the lips in all the blessings of joy, of hope, of heaven! Ah, me!” And he burst into sobs which tore my heart, so that I staid beside him to console him, although repenting having thus agitated him by my coming.

As I exhorted him to calm himself. “Leave me alone, my poor Martha,” said he; “I shall be calm when it is necessary. You are my mother—I would sink under the effort, if even with you I was obliged to conceal my despair.” He then became calmer, and resuming: “Louise will give me an example of courage—I know it beforehand. I know also that if I, at least, do not spare her feelings, when her father treats her in a manner so barbarous, she will sink under the burden. But I will be courageous—I will be calm—at least I will appear so to her. My last letter will be written for her and not for myself!” His eyes sparkled: “Yes,” added he, “I will not sacrifice myself by halves! I will do what she wishes; I will appear tranquil, full of courage—everything, rather than not alleviate, as far as depends on me, the sufferings of this angel of grace, of virtue, and humanity!”

It was your servant, Monsieur le Pasteur, who burst into tears at these remarks, so natural to our young master, whom one could not help loving with all their heart, even if he had all the faults (which I am sure he has not) that M. Reybaz says. I encouraged him to the best of my power in his good thoughts, and, above all, by a word of Mademoiselle Louise’s which I repeated to him, which showed that she was terrified beforehand at what he might say to agitate her in that letter. It was then that he himself said to me: “Martha! this very evening you will go and tell her that you have seen me quite well and full of calm and courage.” Sore as my heart was, I could not,

nevertheless, promise altogether, so struck I was with his pale and altered face, and with his weakness which hindered him, notwithstanding the state of mind he was in, to move freely in his bed. More by token that I had to support him when he wished to embrace me.

He afterwards spoke of Monsieur le Pasteur, his Providence on earth as he calls him; saying that as long as Monsieur is near him he feels as it were comforted by his presence, and that he does not know how he can do without seeing him at all hours of the day. "I abuse his goodness," said he; "but only for a day or two longer, and then I will have strength to be courageous for him too. But, you know, my good Martha, when the body is weak the mind is not able to bear up, and it is on this pretext that I put off in my own mind the day for attempting to walk alone. If you only knew, Martha—during my delirium, I thought him dead—strange faces announced his death to me—everything was dark night around me—there was nothing in all the universe!—I am very, very unhappy, but I suffer far less than I did then."

This, Monsieur le Pasteur, is the whole story. I kept back a great many things to make it easier to Mamselle Louise; but I would not say but that, through it all, she guessed as much as I have put down here. In such a matter as this, and her knowing the young man so well, even if one were to tell her a lie, she would see the truth underneath. So all her grief began again, stronger and more piteous than ever, when M. Reybaz came to the door. Finding it closed, he had a right, I admit, to have some suspicion; but, once I opened it immediately, it ought to have been put an end to.

He came in; and, although he said nothing to Mamselle Louise, but kissed her, I saw by his eye that he was angry with me. So in the evening when Mamselle Louise had gone to bed, he sent for me down stairs to scold me; saying that I had failed in my duty to him, that I was shutting doors in order to deceive him, to disobey him, to give messages from this worthless fellow, and contrary to his orders, to aggravate the illness of his daughter; that when I had lost his confidence in this way, he had

no idea of keeping me to do more harm, and that he knew from another hand that I was not faithful to him. I ask pardon of Monsieur le Pasteur, but I answered him that I was ready to go whenever he liked, and that I would go if he hindered me to have compassion on a young lady so unfortunate as Mamselle Louise; that I was certain she would not support the blow which he had given her; and that, although I was in truth wishful to be faithful to him, and to do nothing to deceive him or go against his wishes, as I had done in all times past, and even now, I did not wish any more to join any one in destroying my mistress! Then he had like a fear, and softening down: "I ask only that, Martha, and if I could reckon on it, seeing that you are an honest-hearted woman, I would like you near Louise better than any other. If you had not shut the door, I would have been in the wrong to speak; but when things are concealed from a master's eye all is not well." I did not wish to tell him that it was Mamselle Louise who shut the door, liking better that he should mistrust me than her, and we parted. He told me that on Thursday we were to set out for Mornex, and I was to let Monsieur le Pasteur know, who will find the house in good order, and Jacqueline in my place. It was M. Reybaz who arranged the matter thus, and who paid her half a month's wages in my place, by reason that he is taking me from Monsieur le Pasteur's service.

I pray Monsieur le Pasteur to receive the humble respects of his affectionate servant,

MARTHA.

XXXIII.

JACQUES TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Verrèze—in the Valley of Aosta.

I WRITE to Madame to tell her that things are every day getting worse, and that unless there is good news, to say that Madame will permit this marriage with Mamselle Louise of the parsonage, Master cannot long go on

in this way, down in heart as he is, and changing from day to night, as well outwardly as inwardly. I wish Madame only saw him, such a beard as he has, he who used to be as nice a gentleman as you would see.

And then, the people here begin to talk. The host says: "This young man is in love, or I know nothing of the matter," and went on until I was very near confessing it. The host is a knowledgeable man as you would see; he asked me ever so many questions, and then finding me close as a nut, by reason that it is my duty to be faithful and keep my tongue in my teeth, he added over and above, "If you are an honest-hearted domestic, you ought to write to his parents that they might do their endeavour to give him his wish and bring him out of this state. It can't come to any good."

In past times he at least went outside, and returned with some appetite and slept a little; but, these times now, he keeps in his chamber, and it is all if he will give me time to make his bed and settle the room, so sharp and hasty he has become. And what will Madame think when I tell her that the only time he opened his mouth to me was to tell me he had no more need of me, and that I might take a turn and see the neighbourhood until he would send for me. I was struck all of a heap; for, after all, it is not these charcoal-burners who could attend on him. I answered him therefore that I would not leave him until he should actually send me away—that I was not going to allow his service to be murdered by a lot of strangers—that, besides, I was sick and tired of the neighbourhood, having seen it often enough and far too often, without speaking of the wolves into the bargain, which I have no fancy for; and that I would take the liberty of asking him to let us set out again on our travels. Upon which he told me to keep my advice to myself, and, over and above, to do whatever I liked. Wasn't I in a nice mess? For two months past I have been doing whatever I liked, and I never was so badly off in my life; without counting, that I am forgetting all my duty for want of practice.

If Madame believes me then, she will do as Master

wishes, and she will make more than one happy. Mamselle Louise is country-bred, granted; but she has been educated by M. Prevere, and I make bold to say that if it was not for the father, she would pass anywhere for a lady. Besides, everything comes equal in time, and her children, born at the chateau, will have still the blood of the De la Cours in them. When the name remains, all is forgotten; money has gilded over worse ones before now. Just send a letter to say to Master, "I am going to M. Reybaz to ask his daughter for you, my son," and M. Ernest will enter at one step into a paradise of heaven, or else my name is not Jacques.

I hope Madame will excuse this little piece of advice from a poor servant who only wishes well to his masters. With that, he trusts if he has made a mistake Madame will not be angry with him. In which case, the marriage coming off and the little house being inhabited, her servant would put in a word for the farm, seeing that he would do his best to better the land, once settled with Jeanette, who is an honest girl and has a little penny of money; which is always the surest stake for masters; for whoever has something himself will not be coveting his neighbour's goods.

I salute Madame with respect,

JACQUES.

XXXIV.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO CHAMPIN.

The Parsonage.

I HAVE learned, sir, *apropos* of the communication you made to my son a short time ago, that you are in habits of intimacy with M. Reybaz; and this circumstance will serve to explain to you the motives for my having recourse on the present occasion to your kindness, in order to obtain some information from you.

My son, you are aware, sir, after that unfortunate duel, left Geneva and the parsonage, as well from motives of delicacy as to seek to drown his regret in amusement and change of scene. The intelligence which I receive from

him gives me the certainty that his feelings towards Mademoiselle Reybaz have only increased in strength, and that, in place of regaining tranquillity of mind, he is every day more unhappy and more to be pitied.

I apply to you then, sir, unknown to my son, who without doubt would condemn my proceeding, but urged by a mother's anxiety, to learn if you think I may cherish any hope of seeing, at some future time, a union brought about, which has certainly not been of my seeking, but to which I would be disposed to acquiesce, now that it has become the only remedy for a state of things which afflicts my heart. Most assuredly I would never, from any consideration, have thought of interfering with the rights of M. Charles, or of bringing to bear my son's advantages of position and fortune, if I was not aware that M. Reybaz had positively withdrawn his promise to that young man. But, once this is decided upon, I think I may, without indelicacy, venture to ask you what chance still remains for my son, judging from what you know yourself of M. Reybaz's intentions or the sentiments of his daughter.

It is on this subject, sir, that I venture to trespass on your kindness by asking you to give me all the data which may serve to enlighten me on this point, assuring you that you may depend upon the same secrecy and discretion on my part, which I now claim from you. In any case I cannot, I know, cherish any hopes of a speedy union; but it is the impossibility which I feel of having recourse at present to M. Reybaz or his daughter, which is the cause of my addressing myself to you to obtain some indirect but precious information. I should have gone myself to obtain it in an interview with you, but that my presence in the house where you are living would have risked making public a proceeding which must be kept perfectly secret.

I thank you beforehand for all the information which you will be kind enough to transmit to me, assuring you, sir, at the same time, of the pleasure I shall feel in being useful to you in any way, and begging you to receive my best regards.

JULIA DE LA COUR. ---

XXV.

CHAMPIGTE MADAME DE LA COUR.

Geneva.

It is a long time, madam, since, although without having the honour of knowing you, I have been preaching for your parish, so much was it my idea to prefer a handsome gentleman of note and fortune to a brawler without parents and without property. By dint of hard work here is the first act just finished. The young man is dismissed for good and all, and is not badly off, his subsistence being insured to him, partly by M. Prevere, partly by M. Reybaz, who carries his goodness so far as that. This is as much as to say that the young man is his debtor, not his victim.

In labouring to get rid of him, I always had a notion that Monsieur your son would some day profit by my pains, and would feel obliged to me for them; and Reybaz no less, who will probably end by seeing his way clear in this matter, and understand that the good is worth more than the bad, and a son-in-law of good family better than a son-in-law caught in the woods. So, had not the letter of Madame outstripped me, which I am sorry for, I should have written to her myself as soon as the proper moment had come; having knowledge from another hand that M. Ernest remains caught in the net, and is entangling himself in the meshes, instead of freeing his foot therefrom.

But where Madame has judged very justly is in addressing herself to me, who, I make bold to say, manage the affair; setting aside that, as the wind sets now, a single word at the parsonage would have ruined all and for ever. Besides the time, which is of necessity here more than in other cases, I flatter myself that there is no one but myself who knows the ground well enough to set foot upon it, and to approach the bird without frightening her. I do not refuse to act for the contentment of Madame, asking nothing more than to render service without distinction of persons.

But there are more concerned here than Reybaz and his daughter; there is M. Prevere, with whom Madame is well acquainted, and who, but for me, would have led those good people to their ruin, with a praiseworthy intention if you will. As for M. Reybaz, who never liked Charles, he is right glad to get rid of him, so that it is not on his side that the difficulty rests. His daughter is a girl like other girls, fretting because she has been crossed in her first love; but I would not give her a day more than six months to be perfectly cured of it, more by token that she is a girl of understanding, and with understanding one soon distinguishes black from white. But above these, there is M. Prevere, who, interested in placing his foundling in that family, does not want for influence enough to do it, and to dispose for his own ends of a daughter who is more his than her own father's. There is so much the more to fear, inasmuch as you could not drive it from people's minds that this man acts solely for the good of others, though he alone has an interest in this marriage, which would relieve him from a good-for-nothing that he no longer knows what to do with, after picking him up in his court-yard. This man, who for years has been gazing at his prey, will not loose his hold of it easily; and I am not ignorant that, even at this moment his plot is continued. To say the truth, I hold him as conquered; but, supposing things were to turn in favour of M. Ernest, Madame is not ignorant that these parsons, who make such a profession of charity, are without pity in regard to those frolics of youth from which it is said M. Ernest is not exempt. The world has an ill tongue; besides, in all conditions, saints are rare.

From all this Madame may conclude that, for the present, there is nothing to be done but to uphold M. Reybaz in his refusal; and, moreover, that she take good care not to stir, leaving the management of her affair to me, which, if it is to be done, must be done by me, for it cannot be done by any other. As soon as the moment arrives I will act; and from this day forth I shall not, in my little way, lose sight of Madame's wishes, which will be seconded by her servant, asking only that she will do as

much for him again; for it is clear that Madame has no intention to ill-treat a poor man, and to compromise him with the advanced posts (where he risks at the very least falling out with a friend, and offending a powerful person), without knowing by her that service calls for service, and disaction, discretion. It is the law of the Gospel. I will add another word, merely for form's sake. Some time ago, if I had been willing to second such and such a person, called Prevere or Dervev, to help Reybaz to get into the mire, besides that I should by this time be called a saint by the devout, I might perhaps no longer have to fatigue myself earning a wretched livelihood between a shop without work and a door to open. But, no; friendship above all things, and conscience also. To earn money by doing evil is a crime; by doing good to all and to honourable persons, is blessed bread.

I have the honour to be, &c.

CHAMPIN.

XXXVI.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

The Parsonage.

I THANK you for your trouble. It is the cottage that I have chosen, as you know; and I shall set out to-morrow, having given up the idea of waiting for the return of M. Prevere, preferring to write to him from there, and after trial of the place.

The reason is, Champin, that I have been shaken since yours, and it wants but little even now to make me return to this unfortunate youth, who is the cross of my destiny, to such a degree that I know not when I shall be delivered from the thought of him. I feel plainly now that, among the trials which the Lord sends us in this life, the most severe are not those which strike hard once, but those which worry and wear us out by length of duration. To carry half-a-pound without ceasing, is worse than to handle a hundred weight for two minutes.

I do not love him, neither am I uneasy about his future lot, which I assure for my quota, though not obliged to do so; but it is in my daughter that I find wherewithal to vex me. Here is M. Prevere's letter, joined to what I have observed myself, which has shook me vehemently, and I have felt how dim is the light of man and how feeble his strength, finding myself uncertain about what I had seen manifestly, and floating in regard of that which had appeared to me fixed as the rock of ages.

Once more, Champin, refrain from slandering this pastor and from spying craft in his actions. On this point I have said enough to you to make you know him, and that you might understand that it is neither fitting nor agreeable for me to hear you speak thus of a man whom I revere precisely because I never surprised his uprightness in fault, which is in men that which I prize above all. For this reason I myself desire nothing more now except it be not to swerve from mine by voluntarily deceiving myself in regard to the course which I ought to take. Now, I should swerve from it, if, in order to follow my grudge, which I do not deny, I were to be unjust towards this good-for-nothing. I should swerve from it not less, and in a far more fatal fashion, if, in like manner, I was to shut my eyes to the risks which I cause Louise to run; ceasing thus to look to her happiness, or at least her preservation, before all—though I assert the contrary—and preferring to it at bottom my own instincts. May the Lord guide and enlighten me; above all may he preserve me!

But there is wherewithal to reflect on more deeply than I had thought, and M. Prevere has thrown me into great trouble by his letter. His idea is that Louise will not support this shock, being delicate by nature, whilst, in regard to her heart, she is exposed, to ravages, as well because she is weak, as, on the other hand, because she is strong; whence follows the inward combat between affections and duty. This idea which he suggests to me about the little one, supporting it by examples, I think just; and, if I dispute it, it is upon the degree which she is able to bear, a thing upon which each reasons from instinct more than from proof, the future being in the

hand of God. Only, if I am mistaken, my error is capital and strikes at the life of my child; whereas that of M. Prevere stops short of it, and, though by a bad remedy, aims at preserving her to me.

He says, besides, that, matters being as they are, Theresa would be of his opinion, and would beseech me along with him; that I risk sacrificing Louise for want of her natural advocate, who is her mother. This has moved me more than all the rest, because I am in truth certain, that on this point Theresa would have listened only to her fears for her child, and because I have neither the right nor the wish to suppress the benefit of her memory, to the detriment of her Louise. But if Theresa, woman and timid as she was, would have been less firm and less tenacious than her husband, is that to say that I could not have brought her round, and that, the more she saw me fearful like herself about our child, the more she would have listened to me, and the more readily, accustomed as she was to give way to me, and to subject her will and her motives, variable as are those of a woman, to the vigour and firmness of her husband?

So I strolled by myself around the parsonage, that I might the better handle this point, making supposition that I heard Theresa herself speak, as it is true enough that from above, where she now dwells, she herself hears my reflections and reads in my heart what is passing there in behalf of that child which she has given me. In these conversations I have advanced but little, always finding myself met by the legitimate alarm of this anxious mother, and reading in her eye a sort of foreboding of maternal sorrow. Only, I found that, to fears resting upon a futurity still hidden, I opposed real reasons, resting upon this truth already accomplished, to wit, that this young man is base-born, vicious, disgraced, and without profession, with the same dispositions, at this day as formerly, to fall anew if he were forgiven.

Advancing nothing, and finding myself in anguish, I prayed to the Lord to enlighten me; when the weather, which was bad, suddenly cleared up, as though it had been a sort of prognostic for my use. I felt an inward

peace, and, acknowledging to myself that my intention was really for the best, without evasion or subterfuge, the idea occurred to me that the sun, thus bursting upon me from the clouds, was like a light from heaven sent to shine upon the resolution which at that moment arose in my mind; namely, not to hasten matters, for fear of repenting, and, in default of enlightenment proceeding from reflection, to wait for that which should proceed from Louise's state, especially on the eve of a change of life; suspending for the present any reply to M. Prevere, and confining myself to setting off as soon as possible for Mornex.

I had resolved to this effect, when, on returning to the parsonage, and hearing as it were a moan from Louise, I went up stairs straight to her chamber, where I found the door fastened within. Martha (for it was she who had locked the door, for which I bear her a grudge) came and opened it, and I found Louise in a pitiable state; so that I am certain if I had seen her so borne down under her own burden, and not by the talk of a servant, who had fastened inside the better to work upon her at her ease, I should have written that very evening to M. Prevere, giving him satisfaction and resigning Louise to his Charles. Nevertheless I was deeply moved anew, and, if I have held firm to my first plan, that of setting off immediately, it is in truth, because a week more cannot hurt Louise, and in a week I shall be calmer and more at leisure to answer M. Prevere.

This, Champin, is what I have come to, and these are the purposes with which I leave the parsonage. If then M. Prevere should make inquiry again about a letter from me, tell him that, being shaken, I have taken time to reflect; or else read him this, which will place the truth before his eyes, hiding only the reproach which I make you of being unjust towards him. During my absence, it will be both of good service, and agreeable to me that you should write, in that you are an ancient who have a friendship for me, and also because you understand my language, and speak after my fashion. Only I pray you to tell me the plain truth, nothing else; abstaining from

making ill-natured remarks respecting things which you merely guess at, and still more from judging lightly of our common neighbour. I find it difficult, Champin, to love, as is the duty of a Christian and the supreme law of his Master; so I have a great dislike, when I feel a friendship for a fellow-creature, that anybody should cool it for me, and that I should be pushed down the hill which I had climbed not without toil. But for your letter I should have scolded Martha less for her fault, although real; and if you always paint this pastor to me as a crafty knave, I may at last fall away, and end by committing a great error. Then whom shall I have to love? Louise?—but one's own blood is always dear enough. So if you have a friendship for me, as I am sure you have, seeing me so near losing my balance between so many persons and reasons which entice me in equal measure, you will shun elbowing me, let it be ever so slightly, with false shocks, lest you should see me stagger and fall where perhaps there is a precipice.

It is a grief to me to leave my home and my work. It is the first time, since, now eighteen years, I took my Theresa to Montreux. The poor thing was already suffering much, and we had great trouble to get thither: but, when there, she told me (for she knew from instinct that she should die), how it grieved her to leave me, and to be taken from under my protection, where she had known respect, affection, and perfect peace, in the esteem which she bore me. (Never, Champin, was there a woman who could speak like Theresa!) I replied that she was mistaken about her disorder; that nevertheless, if she must needs leave me, it was to go, though without forgetting me, to a better, even an eternal protector, where it would be my endeavour to rejoin her. From her discourse I could perceive that she was much concerned about her little one (she was weaning her after suckling five months). “May God,” she oftentimes said, “preserve her father to her!” “God,” I said, “will preserve her mother also to her; and if it should please him to take her, have no fear, Theresa, that, after you, I shall ever give her another.” This promise gave peace to her

death-bed, and I have often rejoiced in my heart that I kept it.

It is for this reason, Champin, that I have preserved entire the memory of my Theresa, and kept my widowhood carefully, when, to say the truth, being still young, and having a house to keep, I was urged by my age and by economy to marry a second wife. But even if I had not promised I would still have performed; for, if the flesh has its stings and economy its desires, so also has affection its own; and, to give what has already been given, cannot, and ought not, to be. A cup once poured into the cup of a friend, must not be poured into that of another. A few small drops at most are left, unworthy of being offered, and which it is better not to take away from the beverage, to the end that it may be left pure and entire. Thus I determined to do, thus I have done, without any great self-denial; and now, having reached the down-hill of life, in such sort that I begin already to measure with the eye the distance from this to the grave, it is soothing and dear to me to think that I shall enter it alone, to find there only my Theresa, having preserved free from alloy that faith which I promised and gave her, when I was at liberty not to do it, and when death, through no fault of hers, deprived her of its enjoyment.

Shall I tell you, Champin? Now, after the lapse of eighteen years, leaving the parsonage once more on account of the health of this child, I have a presentiment so gloomy that it becomes painful to me to think of removing, as though removal was to bring calamity to the daughter as it did to the mother. Even this morning, if everything had not been ready, and, had I not been afraid of remarks, I would have given up the idea of going; and the nearer the moment approaches, the more I repent of having so lightly formed this design. My heart beats just as it did on the day when I lifted Theresa into the car, and when the folk of the hamlet were gathered around, shaking hands with her, without much idea of seeing her again. At starting, the horse fell, and I plainly perceived by their looks what they augured from that. Indeed, indeed, Champin, I would, at this moment, give much to

be dispensed from going. It is, however, a relief to me to tell you these secrets, because my idea is that, provided it be done without bravado and irreverence, it defeats the presentiments, and that the lot turns another way, as if, by guessing it, you put it to flight. However, the best way is to have confidence in the good God; and it is in these defiles of life, where the path is narrow and a precipice on one side, that you feel it is to him alone you can extend your hand, all other help being only snares and deceit. Therefore I blame the Widow Crozat, who has fallen out with the good God, and expects advances from him. This unfortunate woman was once religiously disposed, insomuch that she was an example to the flock. God took from her her husband; then the younger of her sons; then the other perished in the burning of her house—all in less than three years. She then came no longer to church, saying in her affliction: “I had performed all my duties; I loved Him; I prayed to Him every day; He has rewarded me by taking my all from me. Go to him, you to whom he gives prosperity; as for me, I shall not return any more.” Poor, misguided woman! With a grain more of religion she would be resigned and enjoy the peace of the righteous; still, such as she is, I have a high opinion of her, for she is neither an unbeliever nor impious, but much rather the victim of her greater faith than the others. It is error and not irreligion. God is merciful.

M. De la Cour is still absent. Perhaps when we are away he will return. It is said that he is still smitten with the little one, and that his mother receives wretched accounts of him; we have not seen her since. If this one had taken to good courses instead of disgracing his youth, he might have been happy at this moment, and we free from anguish. All that I now ask of him is to stay abroad and not to haunt this place again, where his coming would aggravate the evil. Look at the poor girl Coissat; he has handed her over to that vagabond Paulot, who the other day, returning from hunting, beat her unmercifully, and bruised her hip with the but-end of his piece. At her shrieks, the neighbours ran to the house, and did not part them without risk; he threatening to

fire at any one who should interfere. These Paulets are the dregs of the parish; it will be a blessing when the Almighty calls them to render an account.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

XXXVII.

(Enclosed in the following.)

ERNEST TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Verrèze—in the Valley of Aosta.

I HAVE received your letter, my dear mother, and I shall answer it in a few days. I hope soon to recover my calmness. As I am very busy to-day with my preparations for departure, you will excuse the shortness of this note, which will soon be followed by a longer letter.

Adieu, my dear mother! Ever love your son, notwithstanding the grief which he causes you, and let your heart pardon him in consideration of what he suffers.

, YOUR ERNEST.

XXXVIII.

JACQUES TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Verrèze—in the Valley of Aosta.

ALAS!—good Heavens! I know not where or how to begin to write! Madame must come at once. She ought to be here already! My head is going. Let Madame come quick here; we hold him fast, but who knows what may happen? Let Madame come then on sight of this letter, if she wishes to find us in life—I mean my master. Don't let Madame be frightened however; he is well, thank God, without hurt or grief.

It was yesterday morning he gave me the enclosed,* to send it off. "All right," said I to myself, "Madame will be glad." And then the carrier had passed already: "Then," thinks I, "it is for to-morrow—I mean this pre-

* The preceding letter.

sent day. Nevertheless, Master had staid up all night writing, and, lo and behold, when I went into him this morning I found the host there before me, with a face as long as my arm. As I stared at him, he made signs to me; wherenpon fear seized hold of me, and I was all in a sweat. Then I saw a pistol which he held half hid under his arm..... After that, I saw no more, being neither able to fly, or to stay where I was.

When I came to myself they were talking together. Master was in bed, and the host was speaking to him very sharply, more by token that he almost held him by the neck to keep him quiet. At last, Master cried out to me, "Begone!" I made off with myself.

After a while, they called me back again. "You will stay in the chamber," said the host to me, "to look after your master, who is ill; I will send my son to help you in case of need, and that you may be at liberty to go and come in attendance on your master." He had still the pistol under his arm, and another one which I had not seen at first. I obeyed, all struck of a heap as I was, and here I am since yesterday, and not once outside the door, except to write to Madame.

Seeing that, I said to myself that it was robbers, with which the country is swarming, who had wished to make a death; that the host had disarmed them, and that he wished to keep the thing quiet in order not to hurt his inn. I was saying as much to myself, when the host's son, without letting on, made me a sign that it was Master who wished to destroy himself! So may God look down upon us, and let Madame hurry here as fast as she can! I promise Madame not to quit the room, from which the host has taken everything away which could hurt him, and attends himself at meals, by reason of the knives. A most worthy man! More by token, that with him I would not be afraid of a whole battalion of wolves. Let Madame make haste!

Enclosed, there is another from the host, who hath just this moment given it into my hand. I beg to salute Madame with respect.

JACQUES.

XXXIX.

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

THE HOST TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

MADAME,

Verrèze—in the Valley of Aosta.

Without having the honour of knowing you, I take the liberty of writing to you respecting Monsieur, your son, who has been lodging with me for some weeks past. I have had the happiness of preventing him from making an attempt upon his life; and, whilst begging you, Madame, to be kind enough to rejoin him as soon as possible, I hasten to assure you that you need not be uneasy, and that from this time forward I will look after him as if he were my own son.

The young man, independently of the caprice which led him to remain in this place, appeared to me from the first a prey to some deep sorrow; but it is only since the last day or two that I began to feel, from the strangeness of his conduct, some uneasiness about the designs which he might have in contemplation. I then advised his domestic to write you a few lines on the subject. He no longer left the house, he kept a gloomy silence, and his whole nights were spent in writing. Yesterday evening, when I was sending him up something, the waiter found that, contrary to his usual custom, the door of his chamber was fastened inside. He came to inform me of it; I asked him some questions, and it was thus that, by a fortunate chance, I discovered he had been commissioned, during the day, to purchase two pistols for M. De la Cour. I ran to his chamber.

He was already in bed. I made use of a stratagem to gain admittance, for I might, by the least imprudence, have hastened the accomplishment of his purpose. He rose; but I distinctly heard, that, before coming to the door, he made some change in the arrangement of the articles in the room. When I entered, having closed the door behind me, I saw on the dressing-table a towel thrown

over some articles, the nature of which I immediately guessed; so, lifting the towel suddenly, I laid hold at one grasp of the two pistols.

The young man remained for some moments speechless, struggling with anger as well as shame. Then he attempted to assume the tone of a stranger who gives orders to his host, and who thinks he has a right to be at freedom in his own apartment. But I am an elderly man, madam, stout and determined enough not to stand upon words, but to go straight to the point. I replied to his orders by giving mine, and told him that he knew neither where he was nor with whom he had to deal, and that before he should commit a crime in my house or elsewhere, if I could hinder it, he must be stronger than me and my people, and others too, if necessary. This tone calmed him, and henceforth I could speak reason to him. He confessed his design to me; and all that a father could have said in such a case, madam, I said to him. I did more; I took authority over him, I arranged my measures, and at this very moment he is more my prisoner than my guest. My son never loses sight of him, for I cannot place the least confidence in his domestic, who has neither sense nor discretion. To tell the truth, I promised him not to inform you of what has passed; but this, madam, is one of those promises which an honest man, I think, may be excused for breaking.

As you may imagine, madam, this situation cannot be prolonged; and, without wishing to lay any stress upon the difficulty of my own position in the matter, I think the only means of getting out of it happily, is that you should hasten hither. However, if illness or any other pressing cause prevents you from setting out at once, be good enough to let me know, and I will see and get him conveyed home, if I do not decide to bring him to you myself, which, however, would be very inconvenient for me at this moment. The route of St. Bernard is now practicable; it is the shortest way, and on Saturday (which will leave you time to arrive there) one of my people will await you there with a letter, and will accompany you in your descent to this place.

I feel happy, madam, at having had it in my power to spare you a great calamity, and I beg you will accept the assurance of my respectful devotion.

LOUIS MATHY.

XI.

THE FATHER BARRAS TO THE HOST AT VERREZE.

Hospice of the Great St. Bernard.

MADAME DE LA COUR is at Bourg St. Pierre, from which our messengers have just this moment returned, having, by good chance, prevented her from proceeding further. The whirlwinds have returned during the last day or two, and at Mont Velan, an avalanche has overtaken three travellers this evening. The dogs found out two of them in time, who are now with us, and without having received much injury; the third is still beneath the snow. He is one Benoit of Aosta. The fathers have set out in search of him, for our messengers are done up.

The moment the storm is over, I shall send for this lady with a litter; for a horse cannot descend for a fortnight to come. I will, in like manner, send an escort with her in the descent. On the Aosta side, the road is good; it is only necessary to choose the proper time. I therefore send back your man with these few lines that you may be easy in your mind.

THE FATHER BARRAS.

P. S.—They have this instant recovered Benoit. It was Lion who found him out, under twenty fathoms of snow, when the other dogs were at fault. The poor man was quite dead—he had been taking a drop at the canteen.

XLI.

THE MAYOR OF NYON TO CHAMPIN.

Nyon, in the Canton of Vaud.

I HAVE made some inquiries, sir, respecting the subject on which you consulted me; but you have given me so few data that I have succeeded in tracing nothing positive. The only thing which I have to tell you, is that, in the same month, two days from the date when these wretches must have left your canton, I find by the register that a man and woman were conducted back to the French frontier as vagrants and having no papers. It may possibly be that these were the parents of your young man; but, in this case, it would be better, it seems to me, to leave this fact in the shade, since nothing can result to him from it but dishonour, and probably no benefit. It is only at the sub-prefecture of Gex that anything further can be ascertained about these two individuals; but, unless you succeed in finding out their names, all other marks and tokens will be uncertain and almost useless.

I have the honour to be, &c.

PERRIN, Mayor.

XLII.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO CHAMPIN.

Bourg St. Pierre, in the Valais.

I SET out suddenly, sir, on receiving the news of the deplorable state into which melancholy and despair had thrown my son. Arrested here in my progress by the snow, which prevents me from flying to his side, I write to you in haste, reduced as I am to the necessity of placing all my hopes in you.

You may be certain of my utmost gratitude, sir, as well as of the most lavish recompense, if you save my son. For that purpose—I have now the sad certainty of

it—for that purpose there is only one means left. It is that, by our efforts, and, above all, by your prudent endeavours, he may succeed in obtaining Mademoiselle Louise's hand. Let nothing, therefore, stop you; let everything give you courage; and be well assured, that if others know how to recompense your services, it is my duty as well as my wish to be second to no one in this respect. For it is for my son's life that I entreat, that I throw myself at your feet, and that I promise you here that you will not have conferred on me so immense a benefit without being satisfied with my generosity and gratitude.

His dejection is frightful, and it is with a sort of terror that I see myself still separated from him. I am about to attempt to rejoin him. But in order to save him, it is necessary that I deceive him; it is necessary that I give him hope—that I represent to him as easy that which presents so many obstacles—that I conceal from him a thousand circumstances, the least of which would lead him to oppose all attempts....It is necessary that I do all this before even receiving any reply from you. But you are kind-hearted and compassionate—you will not deceive my confidence—and therefore I reckon upon you. Enough. These lines will be given into your own hands. Be kind enough to address your letter to "Verrèze (Valley of Aosta), care of the hotel-keeper Mathey."

JULIA DE LA COUR.

XLIII.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

YOUR letter, in which you show yourself wavering, has made me pity you; and I am astonished that you, Reybaz, a sensible man, should distress yourself thus about wretched nothings. Of what use then was it for me to forewarn you that M. Prevère's letter was a scheme got up between the two parsons, if, on reading it, you let your courage

sink in this way, and see that white which just before you saw black.

Since he writes letters to you, let me write also. I am in no want of reasons to give you; but where will be the use of them, if you turn with every wind, and have no steadiness yourself in your resolution? Your girl is delicate, exposed to ravages of heart, to conflicts? A good reason, methinks, for not trusting her to a worthless fellow, who has given proof of nothing but wickedness. What, my poor friend! do you really know nothing of life? If now, when dependent, when your debtor, and so held up by M. Prevere, and, besides all that, in love—he shows his airs already, how will it be when he is master, master of you all and of your daughter? Have you then yet to learn that from the lover to the husband the distance is as great as from the lamb to the wolf? And, if your Theresa did not survive, though she had found in her husband both affection and safeguard, do you imagine that your Louise is more likely to live for being united to a violent fellow, who, when once tired of her, will not spare her, any more than he spares so many others, when fear or interest do not muzzle him? With more truth than M. Prevere, I will say to you: If you wish her life to be cut short, marry her to that scapegrace, without reckoning the misery that awaits them into the bargain.

There would be still time for consideration if the greatest part of the evil was not already done. Is the storm hurtful to her, to your daughter? But the storm is over; a few drops more and we shall have fine weather. In unsaying what you have said, you will only succeed in bringing on a second shock—your daughter will fly back to joy without regaining security, nor yourself either. I would not give you a week till you would be repenting; and would you then take this Charles from her a second time? It is in this way that you would lose her to a certainty, and that, by not having the firmness to grieve her a first time, you would destroy her irrecoverably the second. Be certain then, that if, having escaped by great good luck from this net, you are caught in it again, it will be for ever. I would lay any wager that your

Prevere did not tell you that. It was with a good intention, I am certain; but still he has an interest therein, while I, who speak thus to you, have no foundling to throw upon your hands.

Have you then forgotten whence he springs, and that breeding goes by blood, as you say? Were it not that I have no mind to hurt this young man, I could soon put a flea in your ear, without further trouble than telling you what they have discovered concerning those wretches who begot him in the woods. It is not I who would be astonished to see him turn out ill; but much more am I surprised to see Reybaz quite ready to inoculate his race with the blood of vagabonds, led by gendarmes from frontier to frontier! Think you that if your Louise had any suspicion of this, the mere dread of it would not go far to poison her whole life, and bring her to the grave by this way as surely as by any other? Ah, it is I, look you, who regret here the loss of your Theresa! Quite certain as I am, that if she had been spared, you would long since have been out of this scrape.

As for your ray of sunshine and your prognostics, I put them along with the doctor's fir-trees. Go, then, and make the fate of your daughter depend on rain or fair weather! Go, stop your ear against the reasons that cry to you to turn back immediately, and let yourself be dazzled by a ray of light, or distressed by a stumbling horse! You might as well decide your daughter's lot by tossing up for it; I would say, much better: for, in that way, you have at least in your pocket wherewith to decide by day or by night, in rain or in sunshine. Leave off, then, such ways of proceeding, in which a man trips up his own heels; and be certain, that in order to defeat Fate, there is nothing like deciding upon sufficient motive, and then holding to it.

As for the remonstrances you make respecting my being spiteful, it is true, ancient: it is a defect which I derive from the breed, and I did not correct it by living with my wife, who had it too, by descent from Eve. A good fellow, withal, as you know, and hearty yet, but for this leg of mine. Spite wears well. So said my father,

who reached his eighty-fifth before he died. At the same time ready to believe, and to declare with all my heart, that your Prevere is the saint of saints, if he but stops there, and ceases to mix his porridge with yours, and thus to get the burden off his own shoulders at your expense. Otherwise I keep my spite, which, for my part, I call good sense; and I spit it, not as you say, on what I guess, but on what I see clearly and plainly with both eyes open—a holy minister using all his sanctity, and all his influence, to persuade you to give your daughter to a lad that he picked off the ground, a lad without name, without property, without parents; a lad who, to his knowledge and yours too, is ungovernable, vicious, a spendthrift, a brawler; the fittest among a thousand to drive a father-in-law mad, and to fret a wife into her grave; who has already forfeited his profession before he entered upon it, just as he was marked with infamy before he was born, and as, before being a husband, he will have harassed, tormented, vexed, all his patrons, and drawn floods of tears from his intended. You dread the precipice? well, there it is, Keybaz. M. Prevere conceals it from you under his gown, while I, I point it out to you; I measure its depth for you, I show you the rocks, the points, the sharp angles, upon which your Louise will fall and be dashed in pieces; and, when once she is flung headlong you will not run to save her but rather fling yourself after her, and so perish with her! If it is spite to speak thus to you, it is not at least a spite to laugh at, but a spite which keeps you on the brink of this gulf. Tell me that you are firmly resolved not to throw yourself into it, and I will at once admit that I am an ill-natured fellow, withdraw what I have said, and humbly beg your pardon for having been capable of thinking ill of your minister.

A propos of the De la Cours, of whom you prate in your letter—I had occasion to see that lady on her passage through Geneva.* It was respecting a small house in the Rue du Temple belonging to her, which I had some idea of purchasing between my son-in-law and myself, in order to get out of this lodge and enjoy the

* This falsehood is explained by the next letter.

rest of my years there. Without seeming to have anything on my mind but this affair, I asked if her absence would be long. I got neither yes nor no: the thing depends on her son, who has quite forsaken his frolics, but is still attached to your Louise, and cannot forgive himself for having lost her for want of a little good conduct. Meanwhile, he is travelling in Italy. For my part, I have no great love for this youth, and I shut my eyes to his former intrigues as well as to his present good conduct; but I admire the manner in which you reason in regard to him. Here you were ready to ally yourself to a vagabond who bears a stain on his birth which nothing can wash out or take away, and, at the same time, that affair being off, you would send a-travelling, and far away too, a gentleman of good family, with no other fault than some youthful frolics, already forgotten, and all capable of being repaired: for after all, at five-and-twenty it is soon enough to strike into the right path. Do not take him—well and good; but, with much better reason, reject the other, or I shall say that you are stone-blind. Without reckoning that in this good lady you would find a second mother for your Louise, without detriment to your widowhood, which you have done well to keep faithfully.

Farewell, ancient. Weigh all this, and above all make no promises without acquainting me, thus depriving yourself of a last counsel from him who is devoted to you with all his heart.

CHAMPIN.

XLIV.

CHAMPIN TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Genera.

If her servant had acted from interest, he might readily have given up at the first view all idea of seconding Madame, on reading of her last, dated from Bourg-Saint-Pierre. The charge is a hard one to accept, suddenly too like that, without concerting together, and for me to make good here, amidst greater difficulties than ever, what Ma-

dame promises her son yonder, without any other trouble than that of speaking. But, as I have said, her servant has compassion on the distress of Madame, and understanding (though indeed her letter gives no explanation thereupon) that her son has had some bad design, as one might say to destroy himself, he cannot take it so much amiss that Madame is thus urgent with her entreaties, and throws a poor devil like her humble servant into trouble and embarrassment.

I may tell Madame that, since her departure, all is at sixes and sevens. As I predicted, the good pastor has stout claws, and will not let go his prey without leaving the marks of his talons upon it. In concert with M. Dervev, he has written Reybaz a letter in which he shows him his daughter dead before the end of three months if he refuses Charles; and Reybaz has swallowed the prediction greedily, being a devout man and believing in prognostics; so that, but for me, he would turn back at once. All that I was able to do, with great difficulty, was to keep him in suspense, when the day before yesterday comes Madame's letter, like a bomb, and left me stunned as it were by the blow.

On coming to myself I set about answering Reybaz's last, in which he gives me an account of his wavering in favour of Charles; and, by reason that I should prefer in his place to give my daughter to a day-labourer rather than to that youth, I wrote to him from the abundance and the friendship of my heart, to hold him back from the brink of the abyss, and in the same terms as I should have done if I had never heard of Madame in my life.

And then, reflecting that Madame, on her side, was busy down yonder, promising what she charges me to make good, a fear came over me that I had not done enough for her; so that I endeavoured towards the ending of my letter to prepare the way, without appearing to do so—touching on many points which I was not commissioned to touch upon, but under the idea that if Madame, although at a distance, and without being able to arrange together, relies upon me, I must of necessity in return be able to rely upon her. It was necessary, having hereafter to commu-

nicate with Madame, to devise a pretext for preventing suspicion. I therefore told Reybaz that I had seen Madame on her passage through Geneva, about a small house (that little building belonging to Madame in the Rue du Temple) which I was thinking of purchasing from her, in order to end my days there, "far from the world and noise," as the song says. In this fashion, Reybaz will know why I have occasion to communicate with Madame, and, on the other hand, it will depend on Madame (if indeed I have rightly comprehended her intentions) to make the pretext turn out as it were a true one, having conceived that I was acting for her interest as well as my own. I request, therefore, that Madame will make me sure on this head, and explain herself, before engaging myself any further, being ready to throw up everything and to leave the business to others, if she finds that I have exceeded her intentions and abused the power which, after all, I did not ask her for.

have the honour, &c.

CHAMPI.

XLV.

MARTHA TO M. PREVERE.

*Mornex.**

It is fitting that I let Monsieur le Pasteur know all about our departure, and our establishment here; which I have the more heart to do, that I am full of joy in seeing that things are not quite so bad as one might have feared.

It was on Thursday that we set out from the parsonage. The evening before M. Reybaz seemed to me uneasy and downhearted, slipping away oftentimes to stroll about alone, in spite of the rain, and many preparations which would have been the better of his overlooking. Before our departure I found him getting still more gloomy and

* A little hamlet situate about two leagues from Geneva, on the slope of Mount Saleve, in a wooded country from which can be seen the entire chain of Mont Blanc.

as if weighed down with a great sorrow. Mamselle Louise having appeared before him, he seemed heavily troubled; upon which, not without embarrassment, he kissed her more warmly than is usual to his backward disposition; and then, not finding any remedy for his trouble, the tears came into his eyes. "It reminds me of an ill-fated day....." said he, and he seemed to me to want courage to set out. Mamselle Louise, as you know what an angel she is, then began to console him with so much affection and such good remarks, as if she had been herself content and easy in her mind, that, having got the better of his fit of trouble, he gave the word to harness.

It was the Legrands' open car. M. Reybaz himself had put in the covered bench for Mamselle, whether for fear of the rain, or that she might find herself more retired and less in view. Afterwards, believing that she would be alone and more at her ease, he placed himself on the bench behind, which is uncovered. Old Legrand drove us.

I felt pity for the state of this poor father, so unhappy did he seem at this hour at the remembrance of his wife, whom he brought away in like manner nineteen years ago. He who is usually so firm, and sometimes even rather rough, he was weak-like and full of trouble, looking at the horse, at the driver, and at the wheels, fearing at every turn of the road to meet something unlucky, to such a point that greatly agitated at the turning of Vernier, he caught hold of my hand. However, everything going on well, he at last got easier; above all, after we had passed the town, and had quitted the road which he travelled formerly when conducting the defunct to Montreux.

As for our young mistress, Monsieur le Pasteur may easily think that she was not easy. She forced herself to speak to her father along the road, even proposing to him to come and sit beside her. But as we approached the town she ceased to pay any attention to us; and, leaning back in the chair, she must have felt far stronger than we did the emotion which kept us silent as we passed the street where Madame De la Cour lives. Poor dear soul! What anguish, what trouble, when she was worthy of all

sorts of peace and happiness! So sweet as she is, so innocent of all this. It breaks my heart every time I think of it.

So, seeing M. Reybaz so shaken—when, indeed, I myself was just the same—I was not able to contain myself; and besides it came into my head that, although a servant, I would speak to him once more for my mistress, not wishing to have to reproach myself afterwards for keeping silent. “M. Reybaz,” said I to him, “we are all very miserable.” “It is true,” he answered me, “and the heaviest lot weighs upon me. This boy is the cross of my destiny! and then, if it were only myself, I might have strength enough to struggle.....”

He stopped speaking. Then I began again, endeavouring to excuse poor M. Charles, and saying as how age would cool him down, like so many others, who, though hard to manage in their young days, did not the less come to a good end; that under M. Prevere’s direction, and loving Mamselle Louise as he did, one could answer well for him for the future; that, besides, the lesson was a severe one, and that if he would ever go astray again he would then surely have to be left to himself, but that he might pardon him for this time. That, if he would permit me to say so, I was sure and certain that Madame, his late wife, would have leaned to mercy; and that, lastly, I could not hide from him my idea that, as far as Mamselle Louise was concerned, the remedy was worse than the disease, and that it was strong on my mind that in the long run the blow would”—He interrupted me. “Age,” said he, “will never cool him. Age has only shown him more vicious. Against the instinct of the blood neither training nor directions can do anything, and as for promises now, I have little faith in them. After the sweetheart comes the husband; after the slave the master. As for pardoning him this time, that would be binding myself to pardon him always; for if, at the first shock, Louise has bent, the second would bruise her to the dust. It is the cross—it is the cross of my destiny!” He was silent again, after which he resumed:—

“Nevertheless, Martha, this child inside there—May

heaven assist me!"—and the words could not come. I took the occasion to finish what I had to say about Mamselle Louise, telling him many things which he could not have known; among others how, by her goodness of heart, she showed herself courageous and tranquil before him, but that she afterwards paid for it by sorrows which wasted her away. I let him know that the day when he scolded me it was herself who, the better to hide from him her tears, had shut the door inside, without there being any other mystery in the matter than these troubles which she hid from him. Lastly, I did not keep it secret from him that I found her growing weaker and thinner every day, and by many signs showing that she was yielding fast under the cold blast of bitterness, and trouble, and grief.

It was at this moment that he told me his thoughts. "I see it, Martha; it is before these signs that I shrink back. My idea was to see how this dwelling would suit her, and to be guided by whether I saw her growing better or worse. But vexed now for so long a time, and being no longer of an age to support this vehemence, I feel desirous to hasten this answer and to end this combat. May heaven assist me," he repeated; and, as we now drew near the place, we were silent. But I could guess well enough what this answer would be to the good letter of Monsieur le Pasteur, at which I felt a joy that has never left me since.

We soon arrived at the little cottage. It is on the slope of the mountain. When it was necessary to leave the car, Mamselle Louise proceeded to alight, but, weak as she was, and moved at this change of situation, as also ashamed at the people looking on (the hostess of the house was out, and a crowd of the villagers had gathered round), she missed the step in her trouble, and thus mistaken in her movement, she fell rudely enough; without any hurt, however, but one on the arm—a slight contusion of no consequence. She was on her feet immediately again; but I saw on M. Reybaz's face more signs of affright than I could have believed. He said nothing, nor asked many questions about the hurt, his

daughter assuring him moreover that there was no harm done. But, troubled and full of anguish, he took the packages hastily out of the car, without that care which he always uses in domestic affairs. When I followed him into the house, I saw him seated in a lower chamber, out of the way of the passage, looking on the floor and wiping his forehead with his handkerchief, without thinking of settling the things, or of seeing to any of the arrangements, which were all looked after and managed by Mamselle Louise.

In the evening we sat down to supper sadly enough, without saying a word about our new dwelling. It was M. Reybaz who told me I was to sit at table with them; then, after that Mamselle Louise had embraced her father, we retired. But M. Reybaz remained outside until it was dark night, sitting upon the little rock which is at two steps from the garden.

This, Monsieur le Pasteur, is how the day passed over. Although Mamselle experiences a fatigue which shows plainly enough how much she has lost her strength, and although her melancholy was doubled when she found herself in this strange house, I am happy nevertheless in thinking that these misfortunes are about to end; for it seems impossible to me that M. Reybaz, in the state which I have seen him in, can hesitate to escape from this struggle by the only path which is left open. May the Almighty incline his heart to it! It is the most ardent prayer of

Your very respectful and obedient servant,

MARTHA.

NLVI.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO CHAMPIN.

Verrèze—in the valley of Aosta.

THESE few lines, Monsieur Champin, to approve of what you have done. As to the house in the Rue du Temple, although you are perhaps not aware of the considerable

value of that property, I shall not refuse to purchase at this price services which would restore my son to me.

I am now by his side. In what a state did I find him. Good God! And even now I doubt if there is any remedy. Inform me, I beg, of what passes at the parsonage. The greatest difficulty is to raise his hopes again; I can scarcely approach the subject without his repulsing it in despair. Your letter coming in this state of things, to tell me of M. Reybaz's hesitation, filled me with affright. What would become of me if it turns out that in all I have said I have been only deceiving him? Act, Monsieur Champin! I am ashamed to urge you; but I am so unhappy!

If my son recovers at all from his dejection, my intention is to leave this miserable place as quickly as possible. I shall give directions that your letters be sent after me to Turin, where I purpose to bring him, and perhaps stay there for some time. Inform me of everything. Often-times, in my impatience, I have been on the point of writing direct to M. Reybaz or M. Prevere. Keep me faithfully informed of all that passes, so that I may not run the risk of writing at an unseasonable time, or of missing a proper opportunity of doing so.

I am, &c.

JULIA DE LA COUR.

XLVII.

THE PRELATOR TO CHAMPIN.

Morne.

M. PREVERE ought to be still in town. You will go up to his room and give him the inclosed, which nevertheless you are at liberty to have a reading of first, if it is your pleasure.

I have read your letter, I have weighed it, and I thank you for it. As a father, I think M. Prevere in the right; though, from inclination, I lean to what you say. The combat being over, do not begin it again. Abstain from

judging; and, if you must pity me, let it be so that I do not hear you.

Being here, I shall stay for a month at least. If during that time you do not write to me, I shall have the more repose. In return, I shall not pass through town on my way home without calling to see you.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

XLVIII.

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

THE PRECENTOR TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

Mornez

My answer, Monsieur Prevere, is that I forgive. If it were to say you nay, I would explain my motives, but being agreed, it is not worth while. Announce the matter, as well to Charles as to Louise. I have said nothing to her about it, and shall not interfere in any way.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

XLIX.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

You desire it? Then be it so! Your commission shall be executed; but not immediately, M. Prevere having set off this morning again for the parsonage. It will be four days before he returns. You have therefore still time to reflect and to act—I mean, to save your daughter from the gulf into which, against all reason and against all duty, you are going to plunge her, after having taken upon you to refuse an honourable and brilliant match for her.

Judge you? That is already done, not being one of those who condemn first and try afterwards. As for

pitying you, I have little time for that, having well warned you, and warning you still. But pity your Louise? That I shall not fail to do, and without speaking to you of it, since here you are already afraid of reproaches. You will not escape your own, Reybaz! Come to your senses, then; save your Louise! By the blessing of Heaven, you have yet time left.

As for not writing to you, as you request, I would have conformed sooner to your wish, had you only given me the hint.

One word and no more. *You do not know all that I know about this young man.*

CHAMPIN.

L.

CHAMPIN TO THE MAYOR OF NYON.

Geneva.

I HAVE urgent need, Monsieur le Maire, that you should lend me a hand. It is in order that I may be able to serve a friend, who in less than three days may be stuck fast in the mud without remedy, if I cannot turn him back, proof in hand. To trouble another in order to do a good action is excusable, and so I hope you will help me. I should myself have run over to Gex, had I been qualified for it. But where a mayor is listened to, a poor devil would be sent away unheard.

Since your last, I have made a journey to the spot. They know nothing about the child in the hamlet where he was exposed; but, having pushed on to St. Genis, which is on the road that these wretches must have followed, I picked up something more, inasmuch as—thanks be to Heaven!—they took it into their head to steal some clothes there, whereby attention was drawn on them, and their name became known. I shall write it as they pronounce it. It is *Schindler* or *Schinder*. The day on which they passed through, as noted in the *proces-verbal* drawn up by the mayor, falls precisely between that when they quitted the woods and that on which they were sent

away from Nyon; insomuch that there is no doubt but that they are the parents of the child.

You would therefore, Monsieur le Maire, render an important service to a respectable family, and to me, your servant, if you would have the too great kindness to procure the verification of the name at Gex, collect all the particulars you can about these people, get the declaration signed by the proper person, and return the whole to me, including a note of the expense, which shall be paid immediately. Only, Monsieur le Maire, I pray you not to forget (you will pardon me, I hope) that three days at most is the fatal term, after which a respectable family may find itself dishonoured without being aware, for want of a little aid from the authorities. As for what concerns the young man, be assured of my discretion; and I am ready to give my word of honour that neither he nor any living soul shall learn anything, or be injured, by means of this information.

Once more repeating my request, Monsieur le Maire, I have the honour to be, with profound respect, your most humble and obedient servant,

CHAMPIN.

II.

M. PREVERE TO LOUISE.

Geneva.

I SEND you enclosed in this Charles's letter, my sweet girl. He handed it to me this morning on my return from the parsonage, where I have spent the last few days. As he requested that I would address it to you myself, I take advantage with real pleasure of this opportunity to converse for a few minutes with you.

In the first place, let me tell you, my dear child, that Charles's health is entirely re-established for some days past; his strength has returned, he is beginning to go out, and I am at present in town for the purpose of endeavouring to make arrangements for the resumption of his studies. Let me tell you too, that he displays all the

determination and all the courage which, in such circumstances, was more to be wished for than expected; and may the certainty which I give you of this disposition of mind contribute to diffuse peace over your days.

I am ignorant of the contents of this letter which I transmit to you; but I cannot suppose that you will read it without experiencing that shock and agitation which I would so gladly spare you. For pity's sake, my child, fortify yourself against these emotions, avoid prolonging them; and, assured that Charles is full of courage and that I will watch over him and over his happiness as long as the goodness of God leaves me life or breath, take refuge, I implore you, with some calmness, in the sweet consciousness of the sacrifice you have made to the wishes, but, above all, to the peace and happiness of your excellent father. That, Louise, is for you the true germ of consolation and strength, destined to grow, to increase, to be a shelter and a balm for your sufferings. I have good hopes that happy days will once more return to us.

Will you hearken to my advice—will you acknowledge the rights of my friendship—if, in the midst of your sufferings, I ask of you still more difficult efforts? I have too much abused these rights, my dear child; but your sweetness encourages me, and my solitary situation prompts me unceasingly. Resume by degrees your former occupation, I beseech you; surmount your first distaste with a view to gratify me, and you will in time reap the salutary effects in the relief thus afforded to your sad thoughts. Let those labours of the needle, those domestic cares which wile away so many hours, let your reading, and those intervals of study which used to please and amuse you, not be abandoned. Let not our conversations, when you return to the parsonage, run the risk of languishing for want of topics to converse about; and reflect, Louise, you who do so much for others, that I would in that case be deprived of what is to me the sweetest solace of my days. If I dare venture, I would exhort you also not to shun all society. To live altogether retired would be to deprive yourself of the most active means of diverting your thoughts; for, in intercourse with others, it is necessary

that the mind be on the alert, that suffering be hushed to silence, and this necessity alleviates in some sort an effort which, beforehand, would have appeared impossible. Besides, Louise—but I am sure you are already convinced of it before I speak—it is so important for a young girl not to draw down upon herself curiosity, even by the most innocent conduct!

Another word before I leave you with Charles. I am very lonely, Louise. You, your father, Charles, Martha—all that I love—are absent from the parsonage. Take pity on me, write to me. Let me not remain in ignorance of how your days are passed. Let me know of your leisure moments and of your occupations. If they are peaceful I will rejoice at it, and they will diffuse peace over mine; and if they are suffering or gloomy, will my friendship be totally unavailing? At least it would suffer more at being left in ignorance of them, than in sharing them with you.

Adieu, my dear child. I send my warmest love to you all; and tell your father that Brelaz, his substitute, gets on to my satisfaction.

PREVERE.

LII.

(Enclosed in the preceding,)

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

General.

I DID not get your letter until two days ago. It is true then that in the midst of the most frightful anguish there may yet exist transports of happiness! On reading these lines all was forgotten, all is even now forgotten; it requires reflection and calmness to remind me of my misery.

Louise, you are an angel of heaven! Your voice speaks to me from on high, your features appear to me as shrined in the bosom of snow-white clouds; an indescribable and tender wisdom, a celestial goodness, issues from your lips, a sweet and penetrating charm mingles with

your accents, and carries to my inmost heart respect and love, peace and transport!

These lines shall never leave me more. They are the treasure which still remains to me—a great, an immense treasure, if I had not possessed one more immense still. They are the food upon which my heart will subsist; they are the friend whose slightest wish shall be my law, my counsel, my supreme rule of conduct! Of what have I to complain? With what living being would I exchange my misery? What! I have been the possessor of your tenderness—I carry with me your affection, your esteem! Sweet sentiment! May the glory, the happiness I feel at this moment, flood my heart, chase from it regrets which tore it asunder, restore to it strength and life!

Forgive, Louise, this last burst of an intoxication, soon to be quenched for ever. I know that I must quit this tone, must cease this language, must drive back this flood which breaks its boundaries. I shall do so. It is your wish; and what remains to me now which can please or gratify my heart, if not to give you a last proof of my obedience, by following at a distance your example? Do not fear my words, then. Those lines alone in your letter were painful to me where you seemed to fear on my part a disrespectful warmth or unbecoming transports.

Ah! doubtless, Louise, doubtless when I was dashed suddenly from the height of happiness into the abyss where I now lie prostrate, my despair knew no bounds, and in my delirium I may have forgotten myself, and poured forth in violent words the bitterness of my soul; I may have forgotten that Louise's father had a right to my utmost respect. But now, I only seek to excuse myself for this momentary forgetfulness; and, in renouncing your hand, since such is his will, to acknowledge that along with the respect I owe him, my gratitude is due to him, for the happy days he permitted me to enjoy, at the price of his tranquillity, of his inclinations, and at the sacrifice of his most legitimate wishes.

In fact, Louise, I no longer deceive myself, and I have learned to know who I am. I see that I am stamped with an indelible stain. There is in my birth something which

draws down the contempt of men, even the best of men; and such is the impression this has made on me that I feel some consolation in the idea that I shall bear this burden alone. I long thought that your father repulsed me with joy, or accepted me with regret, from the effect of a prejudice which was peculiar to him. The reason was that I lived with you three alone, and that, comparing him with you and M. Prevere, I could not at that time entertain any other opinion. But since then I have entered on the world; I have lived among men; and everywhere, at all times, I have felt that I am the equal of none of them, even of the most miserable. Then I judged differently of him towards whom I was unjust. I vowed for him a sincere esteem, and more than once, Louise, has it happened to me to melt into tears, to weep with gratitude, in thinking that M. Reybaz, partaking as much as, and perhaps more than others in this prejudice which condemns me, had, notwithstanding, the nobleness of soul and the uprightness of heart, not to yield to it, but to sacrifice it to what he judged your happiness and my own. I shall never forget this favour which he conferred on me; but, if I did forget it, the future, which assuredly has in store for me no similar one, will teach me to restore your father to that high place in my esteem which he formerly occupied. He takes you from me now; but from other motives, at least natural if not just, and to which I submit without a murmur. It is this entire and respectful submission that I give him the assurance of in the enclosed letter, which I beg you will hand him.

Thus then, Louise, I obey along with you. Yes, as you say with that angel sweetness which belongs only to you, Charles approves you, Charles supports you, Charles makes himself your brother. Ah! much more, he admires you, he is still happy that you associate him in your filial submission; and, far from murmuring, he submits, respecting, blessing the man to whom he owed a happiness so great, that even if no joy were henceforth to brighten his life, he ought to be ranked among the happiest of mortals.

And then, Louise, generous and tender heart, what

was I that Heaven should unite me to you? On this point also I have reflected, and the sad knowledge of things which I was formerly in ignorance of has brought me back to a tardy and prostrating humility. No! It could not be that he who was placed so low in the opinion of men, should be lifted so high by destiny as to become your husband. If, to say the truth, I do not acknowledge the justice of this contempt which weighs upon my birth, still less shall I endeavour to rebel against the fact that this contempt exists, and to persuade myself that it was just, that it was not unworthy of me, to sully, in any degree, the pure radiance which surrounds you. No, Louise, these were illusions which time must necessarily have destroyed. M. Prevere flattered them; you partook of them, my sweetest love; and I, in my ignorance, drank of them with delight..... Your father alone, who saw things in their real point of view, yielded with repugnance what public opinion would one day blame him for having yielded.

Sad knowledge, bitter experience which I have acquired! But what would have become of me if this frightful discovery had surprised me without defence, without my being able to find anything in myself, anything in my past life, to oppose to it? Where is the pride that would consent to choose between outrage and pity? or, incessantly placed as a target for the invisible attacks of a barbarous prejudice, would not rather break than stoop under them? But I bless Providence that it was sufficient for mine to have been loved by Louise, by M. Prevere. This assurance calms it, this remembrance strengthens it; it may henceforth be put to the proof, and expose itself, if not without disgust, at least without danger, to contact with men. Thus, Louise, even after having lost you, the wretch who speaks to you, owes you all. Your image is beside him to gladden his misery, to guide his steps in this arid and cheerless track, to defend him against the despair, which with it he will be able to subdue, but which without it would already have doomed him to destruction.

Let us turn away our eyes: It is to your letter that

I wish to reply. But wherefore, dearest, did you not yield to that embarrassment which prompted you to keep silence on a suggestion which afflicts me, which almost outrages my feelings? Louise! what impossible wish did you venture to form?—what fatal counsel did your pen trace? Would you then deprive me of the only blessing which now remains to me?—and do you think that without this worship, that in ceasing to devote to you my heart, death would not appear to me a thousand times preferable to life? Need I tell you that happiness for me is ended, and that I expect no other? Suffer me then to retain its embers—suffer me to preserve them intact, sacred. Counsel me not—ask me not—to seek other treasures. Oaths?—miserable ties—vain and deceitful forms!—good only for those hearts which doubt themselves. Oaths? I would pour them forth, if I thought they could prevent me from forgetting you. But the feeling which fills my heart is stronger than all oaths, and I consent to throw off the yoke when it shall no longer have empire over me.

And tell me not, Louise, that in making use in this case of my dearest and most sacred privilege, I evince a determination to cherish hopes which are forbidden me, to throw the burden on your father of an odious responsibility—to keep you ever plunged in torment and anxiety. You doubt then the sincerity of my submission, of my respect for your father—nay, more, of my tenderness for yourself! Trust entirely to this last, this only feeling of my heart, dearest, and let your alarms be dissipated. Through this feeling I can do everything; but, if you condemn me to extinguish its flame in other affections, it is then that, stripped of strength, stripped of courage, degraded even in my own eyes, you have everything to fear from my dejection and my despair.

Retract this wish, then, Louise; no longer use these terrible words which spread grief and trouble over my soul. If you renew them, though incapable of ever granting their request, they will not the less be a new and odious obstacle which you will endeavour to raise up in vain between us, as if to forbid my very thoughts to hover around you. Louise! you who say, “beyond that

I remain free"—you who overwhelm with joy and with consolation, even him from whom you are torn, in telling him that your heart can be given but once—you, with the same pen, and upon the same paper, enjoin this friend to immolate his liberty—to be a traitor to his own heart—to give it away twice! No, a generous anxiety, a false alarm leads you astray; and even now I am convinced that, having seen through your error, you feel that you asked from me a fatal, an impossible request, and that if I am able to support the blow which has struck me down—if I am able to renounce the hope of seeing you, of speaking to you, of ever writing to you, it is because there remains at least to my heart a world where you exist—in which it can love you for ever, without constraint, without a rival, and on these conditions can still cherish life!

I now come, Louise, to another wish which you felt no embarrassment in forming, and which you surround with all the motives which can render it sweet and dear to me. Oh, how pleasing on this occasion your anxiety!—how precious your advice!—how the entreaties of your elevated, tender, and pious mind, drew me gently towards those shores which, in your eyes, afforded a haven for your beloved! I had not yet renounced this noble career, although I felt little courage to surmount the recent obstacles which blocked up my entrance to it. But what cannot I overcome, if, supported by the idea of pleasing you, I bring to this difficult pursuit perseverance, moderation, courage! What cannot I accomplish when Louise's finger points the way—when her hand sustains me—when her sweet voice encourages me—when her eloquent accents kindle my extinguished ardour and raise up my broken spirits!

Thus, Louise, I here assure you that for your sake, for my own, and for the reasons which you place before me, I shall devote myself, as far as depends on me, to the vocation of the sacred ministry. I wish to seek in it for independence and for peace—I wish to seek in it a shelter for my weakness and my misfortunes—I wish to seek in it a refuge against contempt, and an incentive to virtue. I

wish to follow at a distance—at a great distance, no doubt—the path which M. Prevere has followed, to imitate his example, to gladden his heart, to do honour to his lessons; above all, to show myself not entirely unworthy of having been formed in the same school in which you cultivated the many virtues which adorn you, and of whose warm and cheering radiance your own modesty alone is ignorant. I wish, Louise, in making myself the servant and minister of Jesus Christ, to subdue that pride, to conquer that vehemence, whose evil consequences you fear; to cherish in my heart humility and the love of my fellow-creatures; to endeavour, without ceasing, to adorn myself one day with that gentle radiance “which the world cannot sully, because it is from on high—which it cannot take away, because it has not given it—which it honours, because it is sweet and beneficent!” These are eloquent words—the words of truth itself; and coming from your lips, they exercise absolute authority over me.

Lastly, Louise, to you so tender and so fearful, I have one word more to add. I wish that when learning that you are taken away from me, no person should ever have reason to look on me as a victim; and to attain this aim, I store up in reserve all my vigour and all my courage. Far from the world being able to blame your respected father on my account, I wish (and in this you may trust him who loves your repose far better than his own life) I wish that the world may not occupy itself with him, or if it does so, that it may justify, that it may approve him. But, the world!--you know it not, Louise. you judge of it according to yourself; the world would have blamed your father for having given you to me; the world, provided that I live, provided that I work provided that I attain in any manner whatsoever to anything whatsoever—the world would never dream that there was any cause for blame to be attached to him. It will instance me as a living example of his indulgence: it will esteem me as even too happy for a wretch whose birth ought to have deprived him of every blessing. This, Louise, doubt it not, is what the world will think; and if it is unjust towards your worthy father, it will be much rather in not

praising his goodness towards me, than in blaming his vigour. Therefore, no more alarms, sweetest; you cannot continue to feel them without insulting my affection for you, or the sincerity of that respect which I here profess for the author of your days.

Oh! how the delight of conversing with you lulls to rest my pain! How happy should I be even now—even in renouncing you—were it not for the desolating thought that I write to you for the last time! For the last time! Delightful intercourse, enchanting communication, cherished lines, in which every word spoke to my heart, thrilled my soul, charmed and enlightened my mind! So then, all this is taken from me at once, and of this intoxicating beverage the spring and fountain is dried up!

At least, let me keep your letters. Could I indeed separate myself from them? I cannot tell you—I shun even the thought. But, at the words with which you accompany this blessing, I felt my courage give way. No! I cannot be proof to such tenderness and melancholy! When your regrets come to unite themselves to mine, the cup is full—the bitter potion overflows. Ah! wretch that I am, why this cross in my path? Was it of my seeking?—why did it not deprive me of life, since it was to deprive me of you!

I must stop. I wish to conclude under the influence of those feelings and resolutions which are to regulate my future life. Dear Louise! You who were in all times the beloved of my heart—you who have been, and ever will be, my Providence—I leave you. May I from afar know that you are happy and at peace—may I not feel springing up beneath these testimonies of esteem and affection which I carry with me, and which will form the sole joy of my life, the deep and poignant bitterness of having poisoned yours—of having turned aside from its happy course your innocent destiny! I am full of strength—full of courage!—I wish to be happy; I can be so; I will be so, doubt it not for an instant, Louise, I will be happy if only through my efforts, and in answer to my most ardent prayers, you once more enjoy happiness

in the bosom of the affections which surround you, and in that also, the very ruins of which will suffice to form the happiness of

Your CHARLES.

LIII.

CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

MONSIEUR REYBAZ,

Geneva.

Before coming to what forms the object of this letter, I wish to apologize to you for the hasty words I made use of towards you in a moment when despair and illness rendered me incapable of suiting my expressions to the respect and affection which I owe you, and which I will ever cherish for you.

I thank you, Monsieur Reybaz, for the many kindnesses which you have done me, for the happy days which I am indebted to you for, and, above all, for the sacrifice which you made, in granting me your daughter's hand. I acknowledge your legitimate right, after my being guilty of an act of imprudence which you look upon in the light of a grave fault, and as a stumbling-block in the way of my profession, to withdraw from me a promise which I owed only to your generosity.

It is with these sentiments, Monsieur Reybaz, that I here declare my voluntary and unreserved submission to your will; and that in renouncing for ever your daughter's hand, I will never cease to address to God my most ardent prayers for her happiness and yours.

Your most devoted and respectful

CHARLES.

LIV.

LOUISE TO M. PREVERE.

Morn'g.

It is full time, Monsieur Prevere, that I should reply to your affectionate letter. In the situation in which I am placed, it has restored to me some portion of that courage of which I stand so much in need. Without your support, without your counsels, without your indulgent friendship, what would become of me, thus left desolate, thus prostrated by a struggle so prolonged, although, in being so often renewed, it has changed its nature? Do not abandon me! Your words have power over me; I wish to follow your advice, I wish to banish my tears, I wish to fly from dejection, I hasten—I thirst to find once more some repose, no matter how uncheering, no matter how gloomy.

Nevertheless, my dear master, feeble as I am, do not ask me to shut up all in the prisonhouse of my heart. If I reserve my strength to restore peace to my father, and to conceal even from Martha herself this grief which rends my heart, let me at least allow you to be the witness of it; let me have the consolation of knowing that there is one person in the world to whom I can lay open my soul, and that this person is you—you alone—you whom it is my happiness to venerate and to cherish—the only one who remains to me pure and entire.

I now shall inform you of what is passing here. But, before I do so, let me speak to you of the letter which you transmitted to me. Ah! Monsieur Prevere, everything is adverse to me; my very wishes and intentions conspire to defeat me! This letter I feared to find violent, disrespectful towards my father, threatening for Charles; and, if it had been so, it would, I think, have been a less severe trial. But at this melancholy resignation—this pride which humbles itself—this language, tender, respectful, noble, full of courage and calmness, inspired by the most touching devotion—Monsieur Prevere! shall I tell you all!—pity, admiration, regret, and bitterness, struggled for

mastery in my heart, and filled it with storm and anguish. I doubted if I could break so strong an attachment; and thus the combat from which I thought I had been rescued, was once more renewed, to leave me heartbroken and weaker than ever, as much overwhelmed by victory as I could have been by defeat. Let your voice support me. Monsieur Prevere! I blush for my weakness.—But it is too great, too ready to spring up anew, to allow me to conceal it from you. Support me!

Poor young man whom I abandon! Friend worthy of all tenderness and of pity to me, when we repulse far from us—accomplices that we are of in a just world—sharers that we are in a cruel one—perpetrated! A soul so upright, a heart so open and so kind, a character so amiable, once so gay and happy—the beam and the food of my life, which filled its every hour, sometimes with sudden alarms, but far oftener with sweet and tender feelings, full of warmth and attraction—him whom I ever loved from my earliest years, until I learned to love him every day more and more, until I learned to see my lot unite itself with his, my happiness centre in that affection which I bore him! Struck with a blow so cruel, stripped of all blessings, both in the present and in the future, behold him forgetting himself to think only of me—behold him, broken with suffering, find once more a smile to call it back to my lips: behold him, dejected, promise to be courageous—despairing, feign to be calm—and when wounded to the heart, hide his wounds, and breathe nothing but accents of gentleness and moderation!

I enclose you his letter, Monsieur Prevere. After you have read it, you will excuse the despair into which I have again sunk. Like me, you will know even better than before, that this young man, notwithstanding his failings, notwithstanding his errors, and above all, notwithstanding this stain which they impute to his birth, is a noble creature, brilliant with amiable and excellent qualities, a character such as is seldom met with, the fire and energy of which yield only to that still greater rectitude, and that gentle and at the same time lively sensibility, the examples of which are so rare!

On reading those lines over again, my dear sir, and seeing the tone in which I have spoken to you, I feel an emotion of shame. Is my mind not wandering? It sometimes occurs to me to fear it, in the midst of the grief and agitation which fill my soul, and the efforts which I make to restrain myself. However I write to a master full of affection and indulgence, and it seems to me as if I would fail in my duty to him more, in veiling by any artifice the state of my heart, than in disclosing to him all that passes there. Pardon me, then, my dear master!

We have been settled here in this new retreat for the last two days. I feel, as it were, a weight of weariness and bitter loneliness sinking me to the earth. This lovely country—this peaceful valley—all this scene filled with calm and with silence, offers only a melancholy contrast to the agitation of my mind. It carries me back, unceasingly, to those days when I enjoyed with rapture these same impressions; it unceasingly adds to my present sufferings the vivid and painful remembrance of former joys. Nevertheless, it is impossible to be more comfortably settled than we are, to be more kindly received by the people who surround us, to be at more perfect liberty to act in every respect as our fancy dictates. If my father recovers sufficient peace of mind to return to his former habits, there is a little garden adjoining the house which he can take the management of and labour in at his pleasure.

But, Monsieur Prevère, this poor father causes me the deepest pity. I know so well the uprightness of his motives, his justice, his tenderness, his entire disinterestedness in everything which concerns me—and yet I see him influenced, by a repugnance, which in him is closely interwoven with that justice and that tenderness—influenced by prejudices which make common cause with his conscience—store up misery for himself, and give the crowning blow to mine without my being able to bring him any succour! He cannot act otherwise than he does, and yet what he does alarms him and rends him asunder. I have seen him ready to retrace his steps, ready to forget all, and then with a painful effort overcome these feelings

by the certainty he feels that, in acting so, he would only have to reproach himself more bitterly still.

He was therefore, on arriving here, gloomy and dejected as I have never before seen him. In alighting from the car which brought us here, I was awkward enough to stumble and fall, without however doing myself any injury. On rising, I saw him pale, unmanned, a prey to violent inward emotion, and loading me with caresses. Then, immediately afterwards retiring to his apartment, he did not leave it again during the evening. I had leisure then to reflect anew on my own situation, and on that of a father so worthy of veneration, so devoted, to whom I have never caused any but uneasy joys or else troubles unceasingly recurring, and touched with gratitude towards him, penetrated with regret for having done so little for his happiness, and with the fear of poisoning his old age, I resolved to display before him more courage and contentment, to restore to him, if in my power, the calmness which he has lost, and the joy which he no longer knows.

Yesterday morning he was equally dejected, and contrary to my expectations, he made few inquiries about me, so absorbed was he in his reflections. But, towards ten o'clock, having sent a little girl to town to carry to his friend a note,* the tenor of which I am ignorant of, he returned to me more tranquil-looking, and made several inquiries about our dwelling. From thenceforth I forced myself to appear courageous and satisfied before him, I assured him that this house and the neighbourhood pleased me greatly, that I did not doubt but that it would do me a great deal of good, if I could only see him happy and disposed to recover his peace of mind, as I was myself. I had proceeded so far when your letter arrived; I retired into my apartment to read it as well as the one from Charles, and I have already told you how this letter made me waver in my resolution, and lose once more, all courage. I passed the rest of the day alone, without my

* The note, in which was enclosed a letter with the precentor's pardon.

father, contrary to his usual custom, keeping a watch on my dejection and my tears.

This morning I had recovered some strength; above all, I had to hand my father the letter which Charles addresses to him in renouncing me. I proceeded to the garden to join him. He himself held in his hand a note from his friend which the messenger had just brought him.* His forehead was again overcast; and this is not the first time that I thought I could remark that the letters from this friend of his produce this effect upon him. I accosted him with a tranquil air: "Here, my father," said I, "is a letter from Charles to you; it was enclosed in that which he has written to me with your permission, and which is the last he will write to me. Charles is full of resignation, of courage, of respect for your wishes." I here stopped, for my father just then opened Charles's letter, of which I send you a copy enclosed; and, as his eyes ran through the lines, a slight shade of discontent and a feeling of esteem which he could not help granting him, although with regret, could plainly be read on his features. "If these things are true," said he, scrutinizing my countenance, "and if I could believe in the improvement which you feel in your health"—He stopped, as if again seized with a gloomy doubt; and then I protested with all my strength the truth both of Charles's sincerity, and of the comfort which I experienced compared with the last few days, in seeing the struggle ended, and in having henceforth no other wish than to forget the past, to resume my ordinary avocations, and to do my utmost for the restoration of my health, which would now be the more prompt and assured that I had no longer any anxiety about Charles and about the feelings with which he supported his change of lot.

These words did not produce on my father all the effect which I expected, and, instead of freeing him from the state of anxiety in which he has been since he came here, they seemed to throw him back once more into it. Alas! Monsieur Prevere, I see it with bitter grief, I

* From Champin, in which occur these words: "You do not know about this young man all that I know."

cannot read his thoughts as formerly. Is his confidence withdrawn from me? Have the torments which I cause him embittered him against his daughter? You cannot imagine with what sadness I see myself frustrated in the expectation which I had formed of solacing him, of seeing him trust entirely to me, of seizing on the hopes which I presented to him, and experiencing one of those revulsions, speechless indeed but vehement, as is natural with a character of his stamp, on emerging from which he is calm, and betrays his satisfaction by almost imperceptible signs, which do not however escape my heart. Nevertheless I persevered; and when I left him I had succeeded in inspiring him with some confidence in my words.

This, Monsieur Prevere, is the state of affairs with us at present. Second me in my efforts, I beseech you. I must restore peace to my father. I feel that I would find some consolation in fulfilling this duty. The deep pity with which he inspires me counterbalances and brings some comfort to my own sorrow; it gives me strength to act when otherwise I would not know where to seek it. As long as he does not think me happy, or in the way of becoming so, he will be tortured—torn asunder—inclined perhaps towards projects which he can no longer accomplish, I am only too firmly convinced, without being more tortured, more torn asunder still; so closely allied in him are his prejudices, his presentiments, his instincts, with the tenacity and the uprightness of his mind, the scruples of his conscience, and the disinterested nature of his resolutions. As his excessive agitation had induced him to apply to Martha, who did not attempt to conceal from him my tears, I find it necessary to be on my guard with Martha herself, and thus to make use of her assistance perhaps in repairing the evil of which I am the primary cause. May God grant me strength to accomplish this task! May He grant that I be the only sufferer; and, if so, I shall have received from his goodness all that I can henceforth expect from it!

I have no longer, Monsieur Prevere, either the permission or the wish to write to Charles; but I think I shall not be infringing upon my father's orders by requesting you

to express to him, not the agitation into which his letter has thrown me, but the consolation I find in the hope that his courage is real, that his resolution is durable, and his resignation sincere. Tell him that, if this be so, Louise esteems, admires, thanks him. Tell him that, through him alone, she tastes as much of happiness as it is given her to enjoy amidst the shipwreck of her hopes and her dearest affections. What shall I add? Nothing that you will not know to tell him with more prudence, and as much affection as myself. Therefore, I leave you, my dear master— I leave you with him; and this is, of all I see around me, of all that I know, the sole, the only thing which breathes true consolation to your tenderly attached

LOUISE.

LV.

THE MAYOR OF NYON TO CHAMPIN.

Nyon.

I am in the track of these people, sir, and almost on the point of learning their history, which is not in truth very brilliant. However it is impossible for me to furnish you with the exact particulars, and a copy of the different documents, within the time to which you limit me. It was at Bourg that the father was sentenced, thirteen years ago; and I cannot, at this distance, oblige the functionaries there to whom I have applied to make great diligence. Let your friend therefore endeavour to gain time, and he shall soon know all the facts of the case. For the rest, I trust to your honour to make no use of these documents which is not strictly correct.

I have the honour to be, sir, &c.

PERRIN, Mayor.

LVI.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

(By an Express.)

Geneva.

Do not stir, or you run the risk of being dishonoured for ever,—you and your Louise. Luckily your note is still in my hands!

In a few days you shall know whence he springs, and you shall learn that you alone guessed right, before you were fascinated. Malefactors, Reybaz! prison, infamy! ...I know not all....Stir not a step.

Your friend, not for nothing, as you see.

CHAMPIN.

LVII.

M. PREVERE TO THE PRECENTOR.

The Parsonage.

You ought, Monsieur Reybaz, to have received some time since a letter from me. It is now of old date, but it was pressing; and I cannot think that you intended to leave it unanswered. I learned that you wished for time to reflect, but I now tell you that you must hasten—that you must hasten speedily. Your daughter is undergoing a struggle which it will be impossible for her long to support. And I no longer submit to you doubts and fears, but a deep conviction.

No! my old and dear friend, no, I could not love you as I do, I would be unworthy even to press your hand, if, from motives of expediency which had only you for their object, I concealed from you the imminent peril in which I see your Louise placed. Listen to me, I conjure you! Listen to the expression of this solemn alarm which I feel, and which I ardently long to communicate to you while it is yet time! Once more, God is my witness that in this I think not of Charles. It is Louise,

Monsieur Reybaz, of whom I think; it is of you, my friend. You are straying from the right path—I feel assured of it, I see it with increasing affright; and to guide my judgment, I have information which you have not. To restore peace to your breast, Louise deceives you; and the more tranquil and satisfied you see her, the more does she effort to appear so waste her away—the more does this wound which she conceals from you extend its secret ravages and its corroding pain. You would draw the same conclusion yourself from the letters which she writes me, the secret of which I thus disclose to you, although it costs me much to do so, because I owe it to you—because I would give my life to save her, and you along with her.

Louise, Monsieur Reybaz, loves Charles more—far more than you have imagined, far more than even I myself believed. She loves him with an affection vivid, ardent, deep-seated, and which is rendered deeper still by the esteem with which she regards his character and his talents, and the pity which his situation inspires. That she may be mistaken on many points, is possible; but this is a fact which matters little. She loves him—she loves him, after you, with her whole affection; she can no longer tear herself from him, and, condemned to break off forcibly a tie so strong, a tie which constituted for her her whole future happiness, and for Charles his entire existence, she pines away in the attempt to shut up within her heart sentiments which constituted its felicity and its life. Already you have seen her health deeply affected, her pale cheek, her languid eyes, and that factitious courage which seeks to conquer a deep and real langour. Martha dares not tell you all; but I know through her what Louise's nights are, and what symptoms of wasted health these few weeks have already produced in her.

Let me conceal nothing from you, my dear friend. Your daughter submits to your will, but not without a struggle, nay, even more—not without remorse. These considerations of birth have with her no force; or, rather, they have force to draw her closer to Charles—far more force

than they have on your mind to alienate you from this young man. With her love for this unfortunate youth, humanity, and even pity are largely mingled, and from thence arises a spring of bitterness and sorrow more calculated to break her down, to sap her strength, than even the sting of hopes deceived. Ah, take pity on her, my dear Reybaz!—take pity on this angel!—do not run the risk of making these heavenly traits in her character turn against her and rend her! Do not run the risk of making this noble and winning creature the victim of those very qualities which raise her so high above all around her! If you persist she will be this victim—I do not doubt it.”

And you—you, my old friend, without speaking of that future which threatens you in all that you hold dearest in the world, look at the present. Are you happy? No! anguish takes possession of you, care gnaws your heart, you have not that peace which follows resolutions evidently good, or evidently necessary. I do more than doubt this—I know it. I know it from your daughter herself; because, in seeing you in this state, she utters bitter reproaches against herself, she accuses herself of having poisoned your days; and, in order to repair these evils, she adds to her other torments the effort of appearing happy before you. Ah! retrace your steps—retrace them quickly, my dear Reybaz, or you are lost! And may God grant that the hour has not already struck, after which return is in vain—remedy barren!

I write to you under the influence of extreme agitation, for my convictions are clear, a strong light bursts in upon me, I reproach myself for not having spoken to you with the same urgency in my preceding letter. Retrace your steps, my dear Reybaz! It here concerns our child!—you do not love her more than I. You will not lose in her more than I will. I shall have to reproach myself as bitterly as you. Retrace your steps, my dear Reybaz—retrace them! Let a letter from you bring the announcement of it speedily; it is the urgent and solemn prayer of your faithful and tenderly affectionate

PREVERE.

LVIII.

THE MAYOR OF NYON TO CHAMPIN.

Nyon.

I beg to hand you, enclosed, the documents in question. You will there find, by the bill of indictment, the direct proof that your young friend is really the child of these individuals. I shall add here some details that I have succeeded in collecting, in addition to the documents themselves, the expense of which I beg that you will repay me as soon as convenient. It amounts to 47 f. 50 c.

The father of the young man was born at Colmar. He occupied a very respectable position in that town; but a suspicion which was entertained respecting his probity, added to a passion for play and other evil inclinations, led him by degrees to the commission of a host of misdeeds, which brought him, on the first occasion, before the tribunals of the place; when, condemned to two years' confinement, he underwent his sentence, and during that time became divested of the last remains of shame and morality.

It was before this affair occurred, and while his legitimate wife was still alive, that his connexion with the mother of your young man, who was then in his service, commenced. After his first term of confinement was ended, she followed him; and for two or three years they led a wandering life—sometimes earning their livelihood by the exercise of some little trade, but more frequently constrained by the depth of their distress to beg their bread. Their first child died at four years of age, either from the consequences of their poverty, or of the ill-treatment with which the father overwhelmed him. He was a harsh unfeeling man, and of unbridled violence. It was he who, by dint of brutal severity, obliged his unfortunate wife to remain in the vicinity of the frontier on the approach of her confinement; it was he who, notwithstanding her cries and prayers, carried the infant and placed him in the court-yard of a neighbouring parsonage, where, having abandoned him, he persuaded the woman that he had

perished. This is attested by the answers of this unfortunate creature, who never ceased to weep for her child.

Subsequently, this man, who it appears had become the terror of the villages which he frequented, was guilty of different misdeeds, and ended by joining a band of robbers who infested the department. It was in consequence of a robbery accompanied by violence that he and five others, being brought before the Court of Assize at Bourg, were condemned to twenty years of strict confinement. He died long before the expiration of his sentence—about two years ago. After his condemnation, his companion, whom he had previously abandoned, came and settled at Bourg, where she still lives. She never ceased to visit him in prison, and to share with him her scanty means; and, both by her conduct and situation, she acquired the esteem and pity of some kind-hearted people who gave her employment, or contributed towards her necessities.

This, sir, is all that I have been able to learn; it is enough, I presume, to enlighten your friend. As for the rest, the young man is not legally the son of these people; his mother thinks him dead; and moreover, from what I have learned, it is by no means probable that she will long survive. If other considerations, then, spoke in the young man's favour, I think they ought to prevail. However this is a point of which I cannot be a proper judge; and the only point which I again urge upon you is, not to compromise my honour by the use which you may make of this information.

I have the honour to be, &c.

PERRIN, Mayor.

LIX.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

CHAMPIN.

General.

ALL is known now, Reybaz. What you have narrowly escaped doing is giving your Louise, your Louise without spot or blemish, to the child of two malefactors—highway robbers, outcasts of prisons—one of whom, the mother, is

still living! I have the papers, duly certified by the authorities of Nyon, Gex, and Bourg, and you shall come—I beg it of you—and see them with your own eyes, not wishing to let them out of my hands; since, after all, it is your welfare that I aim at and not to harm the lad, the contrary of him, who owes me a grudge.

When you felt a dread of mischief from this blade, when you saw in this violent and ungovernable head the signs of vicious blood, of a perverse breed, you saw right, Keybaz; but, tell me, did you see all? And though you had figured to yourself vagabonds, had you any idea of such infamous malefactors, dragged for their crimes from prison to prison—two years at Colmar, twenty years at Bourg, quite close to us? Do you now see to what source to refer your past observations, your fears for the future, that terror which constrained you to hesitate, till, by a great mercy of God, your note chanced to pass through my hands, and to be held fast there till the veil was withdrawn and the frightful mystery brought to light? Do you now comprehend that the instincts of a sensible father, of an ancient of pure and unspotted race, are more upright and more sound than even the notions of a pastor who is perplexed in his views, in his charity, and in his good intentions? Bless God, Keybaz, who now turns aside from you the mortal blow, and from your race the stain that is not to be washed away.

But enough! I spare you other matters beside, which make one shudder. And mark well that the father set out like the son (I say this without meaning to judge the latter)—that is to say, he was well brought up in an honourable situation, but suspected as to his honesty (remember the early fruit) and of a wild and headlong spirit. Then followed debauchery, then concubinage, then imprisonment, then freedom—during which, wandering about like savages, after causing the death of one ~~un~~ fortunate child four years old, they laid this one on the pavement of your court-yard, and went three months afterwards and joined an armed band, with whom they committed robberies, and then were thrown in dungeons to rot, where the father died three years ago!

Let all this be kept secret, you understand. But in the mean time govern yourself. I keep your note, in case there should ever be occasion to show it. Say what you please to the pastor, provided that it be a plump and downright refusal. As concerns your daughter, I will answer for her, if only you do not waver. As for the lad, M. Prevere has done so well that they have taken him back into theology; he is already at his studies again as if nothing was the matter. He will be busy on his side, she engaged on hers; and in six months you will remember nothing of the whole affair, except to return thanks till your last hour for the deliverance which the good God has granted you, when even on the brink of ruin!

CHAMPIN.

LX.

THE PRECENTOR TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

Morneux.

MAY the good God take pity on us, Monsieur Prevere!—may he turn aside that iron rod with which he chastises me incessantly, and at this day with so much harshness, that I have need to muster all my strength to bear up against the stroke. I have seen few bright days, care laid its clutches very early upon me; but I now see that those were the surface of the cup, the sweets of life, bitter though they then appeared to me, and that, if happiness rises to no great height upon this earth, it is different with affliction, which, at first by steps, afterwards by leaps and bounds, can descend without ceasing into an abyss without bottom.

No later than yesterday I was rich—rich in happiness amidst my anguish; to-day I am even richer in misery, ~~and~~ well in that which is come upon me, as in that which I can foresee; so that I know of no issue from this dark cloud but at the close of the journey, in that resting-place the grave, to which age is bringing me nearer, and in which alone there is peace. Thus stricken by the hand on high, I repress a murmur ready to arise, and, without

asking if I have deserved this chastisement, I pray that it may not crush my soul, which I have hitherto kept sound and in balance, but when to do so was easy.

I bear you respect and affection, Monsieur Prevere; therefore how should I have thought of not answering you? But I tell you that, before anguish had seized on my heart and shaken my very entrails, chained down by the dread of this Charles, I could not resolve to launch a word that was irrevocable. However, and long before your last, terror for my only and dearly-beloved child had silenced my most vehement instincts, and it was then that I answered you, that I told you that I pardoned, that I united them. These things I wrote you. The note has been for a week past in the hands of Champin, who was desired by me to deliver it to you.

What has since happened you are not aware of; and if it is, as he says, a mercy of Heaven to learn it in time, it would have been a much greater one to remain for ever ignorant of it. A frightful affair, Monsieur Prevere!—a thing which confirms and throws light on all my forebodings, all my instincts; at the same time that it places between these children a barrier which can never be passed, which I will never pass—I declare it beforehand. Charles is the bastard of malefactors, who for their crimes have been put in prison. It is useless to say more, to you especially, my worthy sir, on whom this stroke will fall hard, and for whom the fact itself speaks enough, without the details adding to or taking from it. These things are authentic, the documents exist, and it is not in the power of any person whatever to blot them out from the register of the world. All that we can do is to bury in the deepest recesses of our hearts the frightful stain of this unfortunate. He must go from among us.

I remain with my child—stricken perhaps to death, as you give me clearly to understand, and as I sometimes cannot help foreboding. This is plainly the will of God! Every time I approach this young man, he strikes and drives me from him by too manifest warnings! This time he gives me a terrible blow—a last one; shall I shut my eyes that I may not see it? No. I will obey. If God,

to reward me, spares my daughter, I will bless him every day of my life, and with a full heart I shall live upon the joy of his mercies: if he takes her from me—the grief will be violent, but not of long duration. Each day this spark of life which holds me to earth will become fainter, and will soon expire; and assisted by you, my worthy and most dear pastor, I shall learn how to bow beneath a hand which, though in our weak eyes unjust and without compassion, is not the less holy, perfect, and abounding in mercies.

Your affectionate

"

REYBAZ.

BOOK FOURTH.

LXI.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO CHAMPIN.

*Turin, August.**

It becomes necessary, Monsieur Champin, that I make you acquainted with what is passing here. I have succeeded in raising a little the sinking courage of my son, but only by displaying before his eyes, in glowing colours, hopes which I am far from sharing in myself. All those which I am able to form repose upon you—upon you alone. Therefore I venture once more to solicit your aid, in all its activity, until the moment when I can communicate directly with M. Reybaz.

It is from Turin that I write to you. We have been settled here for the last eight days. I had the utmost difficulty in drawing my son away from that fatal place where he had taken up his residence. Nevertheless, my coming, my society, and my urgent caresses exercised some influence over him; above all, when, after the first few days, I ventured to converse on the subject which is the cause of his despair. At the very commencement I was obliged to tell him that his wishes might one day be fulfilled—that matters had completely changed their aspect at the parsonage—that the time was drawing nigh when I might venture on some step which the new state of affairs would render easy, and which would become a source of joy to M. Reybaz and a plank of safety for his daughter. But I dare not, indeed I could not, give any

* This Fourth Book commences at the beginning of August, and the letters follow without interruption from this date to the end of the year.

particulars. Besides, he himself listened to me with indifference and did not address any questions to me. It was only when we were on the road that he spoke for the first time on the subject, *à propos* of a letter written to Jacques by his father, which my son had glanced hastily over some months back. This letter, written out of the reach of all influence from parties who could have any interest in concealing the truth from him, made at the time a great impression upon him and sowed in his heart a germ of hope, to which he returned after he had recovered in some degree his tranquillity.

It was with real happiness that I discovered this circumstance, for it alone contributed to give my words a weight which they would not by any means have had in themselves. My son being perfectly aware that, in the state in which I found him, my affliction would in any case have led me to hold out to him the hopes which I did. But this letter, which spoke of the breaking-off of Charles's marriage as of a thing on which all had agreed, and particularly the two persons most interested, namely, Charles and Louise, contributed to lend some truth, in his eyes, to the assurance which I unceasingly gave him that all might still be repaired; that it was only necessary that he should allow time for past recollections to die away, and that, in presenting himself subsequently, his proposals, so honourable to himself, and so flattering to M. Reybaz, could not fail to be accepted. I made great progress, therefore, on this side; and may God grant that subsequent events do not give the lie to my promises, and plunge me once more into the frightful state of anguish from which I have just begun to recover!

For this reason, Monsieur Champin, I tremble on seeing weeks pass away without my receiving any letters from you; for I take it for granted that if you had good news to communicate, you would not leave me a single day in the state of suffering I am in. Your last letter informed me that everything was once more a subject of discussion: it showed me M. Reybaz greatly shaken, and M. Prevere on the point of obtaining the assent of that unfortunate father by displaying before him motives of such a nature,

that, although doubtless exaggerated, they brought tears to my eyes. If they have in your eyes the least shadow of foundation, I request you to make me aware of it before all things, Monsieur Champin; for, however frightful the situation in which I find myself placed, may God preserve me from ever wishing to escape from it by exposing this amiable young lady to the least danger. Inform me, I beseech you, as to the state of her health. The fears which that phrase of your letter suggested to my mind have added to my other sources of anguish; and they are so vivid, that, if I could dream for an instant of leaving my Ernest, I should have hastened to the parsonage, to judge with my own eyes what steps might yet be attempted with safety. Mademoiselle Louise is not strong; M. Prevere is clear-sighted and sincere.—Good Heavens! what would I not give that my son had never seen this young person!

We set out to-morrow for Florence, from whence we shall return here in a few days. To prevent disappointment, continue to address your letters to Turin. When my son is more tranquil, and when circumstances permit, I shall return to Geneva and pass some time there before going back to the parsonage. These are my present plans—but the next hour may change them. In all cases, write to me by return of the courier.

JULIA DE LA COUR.

LXII.

CHAMPIN TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Geneva.

MAKE yourself easy, madam, no more anguish. You told me to act, and I have acted; to succeed, and I have succeeded. The most difficult part of the business is done, the rest will come. Be easy in your mind therefore, and let your son take courage; even as I, merely from obliging so many people, and saving Reybaz and his

daughter, experience contentment of heart, though disinterested in the matter.

This is a secret, a frightful secret, which Madame will keep to herself; since, moreover, it cannot further her wishes that the thing should get wind. At the moment when Reybaz was—not wavering, but decided, (for I have in my drawer the note in which he pardons Charles, and gives him back his daughter)—at that very moment discoveries are made, and informations arrive one after another, and this Charles turns out to be the son of robbers, dragged for their misdeeds from prison to prison—two years at Colmar, twenty years at Bourg, and the mother still living! In good time I informed Reybaz, who, with one foot already in the abyss, draws it back, and blesses Heaven which saved him by the hand of your humble servant.

All this, as Madame may well conceive, has not been done by the touch of a magic wand; and, if my letters to her have been rare, it is not that in other quarters I have been sparing of writing. While Madame was advancing on her side, I lost no time on mine; and while it cost her only words, it cost me both labour and money, as well for letters as for measures and journeys, each bringing an expense, the note of which I hold at her disposal. For all this, when the suit is won, it is not the time to complain. We are now therefore fairly rid of this Charles; the good pastor is put to rout, and the field is left free, with the bird in the middle, whom it now behoves to take gently, and without Madame having occasion to interfere any farther.

Let Madame then spend this time in comforting that poor young man. Here is a barrier placed between Mademoiselle Reybaz and Charles: I know Reybaz, he will never pass it. Now, I am of opinion that girls, when there is a barrier on one side, will turn to the other, ~~that~~ namely, where there is a husband. So, do not fret for Mademoiselle Reybaz. Words are breath. I reported to you those of the good minister, who is *clear-sighted*, as you say, and it is for this reason that he sees no harm in making people ill when his interest can gain by it. Never

fear. Mademoiselle Louise, even when leaving the parsonage, was not so very ill; and, quiet as she is now down yonder, breathing the air of the fir-trees, and humoured by her father and the old servant who attends her, she is mending rapidly, and is getting as plump as an abbess. As for the other, Charles, he is going to leave the country, and nobody will think any more about him.

Herein there is manifestly the finger of God. If the marriage had taken place, and Reybaz had afterwards discovered the secret, there would have been victims upon victims. But I was on the spot. These calamities are prevented; the road is now safe, and the future is ours, if only no person thwarts me. Let Madame then keep herself coy, exerting herself on her side, and leaving me to act on mine without meddling in it; and my opinion is, that the day will come when she will be satisfied, and free to make her acknowledgments, as she assured me she would, in her last but one.

I have the honour, &c.

CHAMPIN.

LXIII.

M. PREVERE TO THE PRECENTOR.

The Parsonage.

I HAVE read your letter over and over again. It fills me with affright. This trial is the most cruel that I could meet, affecting as it does all that I hold most dear on earth, and especially you, my old and very dear friend. Nevertheless, and I return thanks to God for it, one consolation remains to me in the midst of this shipwreck of my hopes. It is that the future, whatever it may bring forth, will find you prepared; it is that you will display on this occasion, and amidst all your anguish, that resigned and Christian strength which is equally ready to bow without a murmur beneath the hand that strikes,

as to bless unceasingly the hand that saves and gladdens. No, my dear Reybaz, you need fear no reproaches from me; but, uniting our sorrows, we will console, we will strengthen each other: together we will find, even in the midst of grief, those treasures which religion promises to those who believe, who hope, who love!

That which I have always been led to fear has taken place; but I did not imagine certainly that Charles—my poor Charles—had to fear any other revelations than those which chance might bring to light. I could not imagine that any man—that any Christian—could take pleasure in searching out things which might destroy irretrievably a creature already so worthy of pity; that he could place to the score of duty—perhaps of conscience—that which cannot fail to be esteemed a great crime in the eyes of the loving and merciful Master whom we serve. I trust most sincerely that in this case your friend has been only in error, and has been actuated by no motive but false zeal for your welfare. But even this error, how harsh it is!—how closely bordering on the most hateful perversity of disposition!

It is my duty here, my dear sir, to make a candid confession. That I was in ignorance of all that you have informed me of I have no need to tell you. But I have never enjoyed, on this subject, perfect security. Charles could not be otherwise than the son of miserable creatures; and such was the opinion which I formed of beings criminal enough to expose an unfortunate infant, that from the first moment I refused to make any researches respecting them. In fact, the first result of any positive information would have been to force me to make them receive back again this little creature, at the risk of his perishing under ill-treatment, or, if he survived, of being corrupted and degraded by the influence of their example. In this last point of view, I applaud myself for having listened to a repugnance which many thought blameable; for having saved from vice and corruption a child who seemed destined to it by his birth. I give God thanks that Charles is rather an unfortunate, than a creature unworthy of finding favour in his sight.

However, Monsieur Reybaz, I have a confession to make to you, which, I fear, you will think rather tardy. It costs me much, my dear friend, to alter perhaps the esteem which you feel towards me; but the moment has come for me to unburthen myself of a secret which has long weighed heavily on my heart, and I leave to your uprightness to judge in what degree I have been culpable towards you.

I knew nothing, Monsieur Reybaz, but I might have known all. It is now ten years since I received an anonymous letter bearing the post-mark of Gex. The writer offered to disclose to me particulars respecting the parents of the child, which might, he said, *be painful to me and fatal to him*; but, at the same time he expressed an unwillingness to disclose them, unless I wished it particularly or was interested in the matter. This letter threw me into a state of the deepest anxiety. I hesitated for several days about the decision I would come to; and, I had not yet replied when a second letter restored in some measure my peace of mind, and determined me as to the course I would take. The writer of the letter affirmed that he had only discovered accidentally, and without the assistance of a third party, what he had found out respecting Charles's parents. He had felt it his duty, at all risks, to make an overture to me on the subject, and whilst leaving me to decide as to what was most proper to be done, he limited himself to affirming on oath and before God, that the secret should never be divulged. I know now who this person was. It is three years ago since I received the note which I here transcribe:—

“These lines, my dear colleague, will be handed you after my decease. It was I who wrote you two anonymous letters on the subject of the child. The secret dies with me. There is now only *one person* in the world who knows it; and, on this side, I can assure you, you run no risk.

“I applaud you, my dear colleague, for your conduct, and I exhort you to pursue your work. It is in accord-

ance with the lessons of the master whom we serve; and who will, one day, I hope, in his mercy, unite us together in his kingdom.

“Your colleague,

“LE JEUNE, Curate of Gien.”

This, my dear friend, is the secret. Every day it has weighed more heavily on my heart. But remember that at the date when I received these letters, Charles was only a lad about nine years of age; that there was no question then of Louise; that I could look upon myself as a free agent—nay more, as bound by motives of humanity, and, amongst others, by the same which had dissuaded me on a previous occasion from making researches, not to provoke fatal disclosures, but to preserve, if I could, from all evil, from all withering stain, the young plant which had grown up beneath the shelter of my roof; that I preferred myself to remain ignorant of fatal particulars which would, on a thousand occasions, have bound my hands, and which I could not have been always sure of keeping secret. Finally, my dear Reybaz, I thought, with this good curate, that in so acting I was more in conformity with the lessons of our Master, and that it was the part of true charity to cast a veil over everything that can hurt, and not to throw away any means of doing good.

Such were my motives at the time. When, subsequently, Charles, now a young man, became attached to Louise, I ought to have enlightened you; and it is here, my dear friend, that I fear I have failed in the duty which I owed to you. But what could I do?—how many necessities pressed on me upon all sides!—and, if I owed you something, did I not owe also something to an unfortunate creature saved with great difficulty and reared by my hands, to whom I was tenderly attached, whom I would not have known how to send away from me, whom I should destroy in revealing that which, according to the curate's letter, would henceforth be revealed by no one? How, later still, when I saw Louise's happiness insensibly become bound up in that of the young man—a sweet and gentle attachment

establish itself between them—and in the bosom of our obscure retreat, hope and happiness descend upon the heads of those two young children, and your daughter love in Charles that precisely which would have alienated from him many hearts less generous, and less elevated than her own—how, I repeat, could I have taken on myself to do that which your friend has done, to dash headlong into an abyss two beings tenderly attached, and seemingly made for each other? I have failed in my duty towards you, Monsieur Reybaz; but I cannot persuade myself that this man has not failed far more in his duty towards God! He held in his hands at once our happiness and our misery; on him, perhaps, depended your daughter's life! Ah! may this unfortunate man never—never—great God!—have reason to learn, by a terrible lesson, by the agony of the most acute remorse, what a responsibility weighed upon him when, in keeping back your letter, he did his utmost to render vain, and frustrate for ever, wise, beneficent, and charitable intentions.

You declare, my dear friend, that you will not overstep this barrier. It is not my place to insist. You had before made a great sacrifice and I rejoice at it; for your sake, because God will judge you; for my own, because I feel the more friendship and esteem for you. I can understand your terror; I accept your declaration; I respect it; but, beyond that, my intellect guides me not. I do not look, like you, upon this revelation as a warning which God has given you to raise up this barrier: God has given us his law to guide and instruct us, and has then left us free; it is for us to put it in practice according to the best of our ability. But if, on our own authority, we seek in the facts which surround us, or which strike us, other guides, other lessons, other warnings than those which his law and our own conscience give us, we run the risk of substituting our desires for his commands, and error for truth; we destroy all moral law; we give your friend the right of imputing to some mysterious warning of God that which he has done in complete opposition to the law which He has given us. Monsieur Reybaz, abandon these ideas, of which, however, you make only a respectable use; believe in the

Divine law, but believe also in the entire liberty of man to follow it or to infringe it; do not abandon or stray from these two conditions of all good, of all virtue worthy of the name, of all elevated, pure, moral, universal doctrine. For, if you must look on what has passed as a warning from God, say, is it not rather a warning that He imposes on your charity a new and severe trial, than a warning to separate Louise from Charles?

Give me, I intreat, some intelligence respecting the dear child. Let her for ever remain ignorant of these fatal particulars. Conquer your sadness, and display before her a peaceful air. Do not shut yourself up in your own thoughts. Venture to speak to her of Charles; let there not exist between you that separation which takes place when people shun a subject with which nevertheless their thoughts are filled. Endeavour, by all means, and by every sacrifice of your own feelings, to soften, to temper, to take away, all constraint; to restore to Louise, if not happiness, at least a calm, unconcealed, tender melancholy; and if you cannot succeed, return here, my dear Reybaz, and let not my part in this task be taken from me.

I agree with you; Charles must go to a distance. Here, opprobrium threatens him; and, indeed, will he escape from it elsewhere? I know not; but it is with the idea that this misfortune may happen to him, and that my presence might become indispensable to preserve this young man from violent despair, that I remove him without at the same time sending him to a great distance. I have made arrangements for his going to Lausanne next week; he will there resume his theological studies, which are interrupted here on account of this untoward affair. Announce his departure to Louise, in assigning as its cause this last motive, in which she will find in it some source of consolation; and continue, my dear Reybaz, to write to, as to love, your ever affectionate

PREVÈRE.

LXIV.

M. PREVERE TO CHAMPIN.

SIR,

The Parsonage.

Although the prayer which I have to make to you be urgent, and although I know that you are in possession of a secret which you have already abused in a most cruel manner, I have thought it right, before communicating with you, to wait until I could employ in what I have to say that moderation and that spirit of charity which I wish never to lose sight of.

It is long since I have become aware, sir, that you were hostile to a wish which I had formed to see united together a child whom I had reared and the daughter of M. Reybaz, although I could not comprehend your motives for destroying the happiness of a young man to whom you were at all times a stranger. I looked upon it as your right, and as due to your friendship for M. Reybaz, to enlighten him with your counsels, to give him your advice. But what has occurred subsequently has inspired me with the liveliest indignation, and thrown a doubt upon your intentions as well as your morality.

In fact, sir, if I am correctly informed, contrary to all justice, to all delicacy, as well as to all feelings of humanity, you permitted yourself to retain in your hands a letter from M. Reybaz—a letter addressed to me, on which depended the fate of two young persons who are dear to me; and this letter you could have had no interest in keeping in your hands except that as you required time to seek out and bring to light a secret, the revelation of which was only calculated to destroy irretrievably an innocent being.

This, sir, has been your conduct. In the eyes of men it would be esteemed base indeed, contemptible indeed, if it could ever come to their knowledge; but there is, you are aware, a Judge who sees and who knows what men cannot see or know, and it is to Him that you will have to answer one day for what you have done. Compared with this terrible judgment, any that I might pass would be lightly borne indeed; therefore I have nothing

to say to you on that head. I shall merely tell you that if you have reckoned on destroying, and destroying cruelly, you ought to be satisfied, and you will be satisfied even more. Charles is wretched. Ruined in his hopes, without a family, without a support for the future, he lies under the threatening weight of an opprobrium which he is ignorant of, but which will not fail to reach him sooner or later. But this is not the greatest evil. It is to M. Reybaz's daughter—the daughter of your friend—that you have struck the mortal blow! Louise had previously resisted with difficulty the slightest attacks. It was at the sight of a wasting decline, the symptoms of which are no longer questionable, that I had with all my strength urged my friend Reybaz to recal his determination, and to write that letter which was to save his daughter. This decline will now take its course; grief, regret, pity, agitation, will now complete the destruction of that frail life, and an angel of goodness, of grace, and of virtue, will have visited the earth only to be withered beneath the blighting breath of wicked men, and to leave behind her enduring, endless grief for her loss!

If these events happen—and I pray to God every day that he may turn them aside from us—they will have been your work, sir. As much as in you lay, and without a cause, you have provoked them. If there then remain in your heart any feeling of humanity, you will be torn with remorse; if any religion dwells in your heart, you will tremble with fear. My words astonish you—you think that I exaggerate, in order to revenge myself on you and your misdeeds? God forbid!—or rather may God grant that I am mistaken, and that you can one day applaud yourself for what you have done! But, no! I tell you the truth, I tell it you with despair busy at my heart. You are stricken in years—you will soon go to render an account, and nevertheless—I foresee it too well—the grave of this young girl will be closed before yours!

Perhaps your conscience is at rest; perhaps you flatter yourself that you have accomplished a sacred duty; perhaps in your eyes you have done a little evil that good may come of it. Miserable sophism, which the Scriptures condemn in express terms, but into which low and grovelling souls

fall, those who are governed by base passions, by evil desires, by pride, by envy, by self-interest, and who approve of their conduct by means of these hypocritical maxims—maxims without value in the eyes of the Most High, because they are strangers to love and to charity! No, I know not what spirit animates you, I am ignorant of your motives, I cannot even conceive them. But I refuse to believe in disinterested hatred, in a gratuitous rancour against this young man. I feel certain that such acts always cloak base thoughts. I am persuaded, that you have done evil that good may come of it—not to your friend, but to your pride or your interests.

Such, in my eyes, is the greatness of your crime, that although it excites in my breast the liveliest indignation, I think you nevertheless more an object of pity than of contempt. You are a great sinner. By this title I love you, I offer you the assistance of my prayers, of my counsels, of my direction. You are a great sinner. By this title you have still the privilege of recourse to the grace of God, whom you have offended. Repent, then; look upon the hideousness of the evil you have done; weep—weep with sincerity over your backslidings; implore the pardon of God and the intercession of our Saviour. It is your only refuge.

I come now, sir, to what is the principal aim of my letter. I know that you are in possession of a secret, the revelation of which may complete the destruction of my young friend; and I know, also, that you have in your hands documents of which others might make a dangerous use. If you should be tempted to keep these documents and not to restore them to me immediately on the demand which I now make to you, I will lose the little confidence in you which I still feel; and I am determined, even for Charles's interest, in order to aid him to support an opprobrium which might suddenly overwhelm him when I should no longer be in existence, and to attract at least a feeling of interest towards him, by pointing out to what gratuitous and base machinations he is a victim—to publish, at the same time, both who were his parents (whom after all he never knew), and how what would otherwise have remained buried in profound mystery, has been

brought to light by the hateful perversity of a wicked man. Your oath, sir, your solemn unequivocal oath—these documents placed in my hands—or opprobrium, public opprobrium on your head! This is the alternative which I propose to you. I wish, in like manner, that if you have allowed this secret to become known to any person whatever except M. Reybaz, you acquaint me with the names of the persons; and, if you do not so, and that the sequel reveals to me your criminal indiscretion, that moment all the truth shall be made known!

I demand, sir, a prompt reply.

PRIVERE.

LXV.

CHAMPIN TO MONSIEUR PRIVERE.

RESPECTED SIR, AND PASTOR,

Geneva.

I have the honour to address to you the enclosed papers, affirming before God that they are all there, and that no person whatever has seen them, not even Reybaz; and that with the exception of Reybaz, who knows the truth, nobody is acquainted with it, nor ever shall, by any means, as well for the past as for the future, and beyond.

How I came by them is this:—it was from Bourg itself, from people who neither know the person, nor care about him. The mother is still living, if she has not died during the last two months, for she was very ill when I was there. In a journey which I made, learning by chance something concerning those wretches, I pushed on further, as well out of curiosity—for which I ought to feel regret and repentance, as Monsieur le Pasteur says—as the desire I had to preserve Reybaz from a fatal step; not having, like Monsieur le Pasteur, the judgment cultivated, nor the knowledge of these two children, and in particular of the ill health of Mademoiselle Louise. A poor man, living by himself, only understands by halves; and thus, with the best intention, he may mar and do mischief, without the good God being adverse to him, as Monsieur le Pasteur imagines in his grief, which pains me so much.

I thank Monsieur le Pasteur for his advice, though

severe, and I commend myself to his prayers,—as also I beseech the good God that his forebodings may not be fulfilled. I hope, that having made satisfaction, full, entire, and without reserve, Monsieur le Pasteur will think twice before he ruins an old man, the father of a family, and who, besides, has sinned from error rather than intention, in such sort that many people who would have done exactly like him, might feel more disposed to pity than to blame him.

I have the honour, &c.

CHAMPIN.

LXVI.

THE PRECENTOR TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

Mornez.

I TAKE up my pen to answer your letter, Monsieur Prevere; for what do I here but vegetate, deprived of that domestic labour which fills up the time and refreshes the head, and passing idle rather than quiet days? However, I may tell you that since this catastrophe which has arisen, without being more happy, I feel less anguish; as it happens when, from the impossibility of doing a thing, one resigns one's self from necessity, and no longer wavers between motives that balance each other. If hope, hope only, had still life within me, I should say that amidst this bitter affliction I still clasp happiness in my arms, for nothing can much impair it that does not threaten Louise. —What have I in the world besides her? The daughter of my Theresa, the fruit of her womb? And if, after seeing one of them perish, I am destined to see the other expire, what lot would Providence then have marked out for me, and on what should I afterwards lean for support to enable me to comprehend its decrees, and to continue to bless them? Could I charge my lips with blessings? No; I shall be impious before I learn to speak a language at variance with the sentiments within.

But it will not be so, my dear Monsieur Prevere. I count upon the innocence of this virtuous child. I reckon upon the prayers which you offer up to God with your

lips which are worthy that he should hear them. I reckon upon mine, which are not wanting; made with fervour, and not for myself. It is not myself that I love in this child. I am nothing in my own eyes. Life, I begin to find a very bitter and doubtful blessing, even with her; and life without her?—it would be a few moments before rejoining her—moments of separation shorter than if, dying before Louise, I should have to wait for her above. Still, when I see you doubt whether we shall preserve her, terror shakes me, and, as it were, a flood of bitterness boils within me, to think that this young, virtuous creature—my own, in short—for whom I have a right to wish all the blessings of heaven, already bears the deadly shaft in her bosom, has a foreshadowing of her tomb, feels that she shall leave me desolate, and that of the three that we were, one only, and the oldest, will remain till grief shall bend, shall break, and shall consign him likewise to the narrow house! My God, preserve us! Have pity on this child! Be not in haste to take her from me! My God, strike not feeble creatures, whom thy blows might put in danger of offending thee! Save us! save us! or else take us together, and let all trace of us be blotted out from this wretched earth!

Ah, my dear sir, where are the days that are past, when we lived without this alarm? Where are even those days, so near at hand, when I wrote that note which he kept back, when I was capable of writing it, when giving my daughter against my will, I still looked on her as saved? Has not Champin, in wishing to do me a service, undone me! Still, if his act is fatal it is not perverse, Monsieur Prevere; he thought to serve me by letting me know, as you in wishing to conceal from me, that for which I bear you no grudge, certain as I am of your charitable intention. Nevertheless, I blame you in my mind for not removing Charles in time: although free to conceal anything you liked from me, you ought not to have waited till the affections of my daughter were engaged. If, on the first signs, they had been separated at the age when impressions are light and affection flexible, would not all the misery that followed have been spared to you, my good sir, as well as to me? Therefore, be

indulgent towards Champin, since imprudence is the lot of man, confidence in one's own idea common to all, and the best, like yourself, as liable to be in fault as the less upright, such as Champin.

I have had leistung to reflect on all that you say about prognostics; and I imagine, and the better for weighing everything, that you are right. However, I am not convinced; not comprehending wherefore, when there is a lack of light for want of education or understanding, and in those cases where the law says nothing applicable to the matter, the good God should not employ this kind of warning, more within the reach of the simple than a resolution can be which must be drawn from so many reasons which oppose and balance one another, and are drawn up in battle-array against each other, much rather making a tumult than winning a victory. From this tumult how am I to withdraw myself, unless I look at the sign which appears to me, unless I follow the light which shines on this side, unless I listen to this voice which sounds confused but loudly in my soul, saying, "Do thus, and be not afraid?" Bruised, eager for quiet, and anxious to come to a decision, I listen to it, I obey it, and if I have reason to think that it is a voice from above, when I already know that it is not an earthly voice, wherefore should I be in haste to mistrust it?

Besides, although if I cannot deny these reasons which you allege, and to which I will henceforth endeavour to allow more influence over me, can I chase from my thoughts how often misfortune has closely followed the prognostic which I had felt without seeking it? I have had some remarkable ones in the course of my life, and recently, only the other day, one exactly like that which, eighteen years ago, on setting out for Montreux, warned me of the loss of my Theresa, agitates and disturbs me, and clings fast to me, stripping me of all repose, even when, at the sight of Louise, who is calm, I am inclined to it. ~~It was~~ on the day when we left the parsonage. All day I had been afraid of something unlucky; nothing had occurred; the horse had not stumbled; the sky was clear and open, as it were, to hope; and I was regaining confidence, when, on arriving here in port, at the very threshold, and as if

to render the prognostic the more striking, the poor child falls and hurts herself in getting down from the car which had brought her! Presently afterwards, I received the frightful news. Still, is it certain that it was to this news that the prognostic applied? and in this case, as formerly in Theresa's, may it not be a sign of much more lamentable things?

You ask me for news of Louise. What shall I say? The days pass, that is all. She is ignorant of this fatal secret, in such sort that, though unhappy, she is nevertheless spared the horror of the livid mark stamped on the brow of this unfortunate. She has received his last letter, which—I saw it well—shook her to the bottom of her soul. By this same letter he sent me his renunciation, worded in milder terms than I had expected. The note in which I forgave and restored Louise to him, was already dispatched. I might have mentioned it, and thought of doing so, but I know not what scruple, unless it was an expression of Champin's,* kept me back from acquainting Louise with my resolution. Thus it was that God preserved me. For, if I had yielded then to the strong desire I felt to tell her that I had given her back to Charles, and she had drunk of that cup of happiness, what would have become of me, when, a few days afterwards, the dreadful news reached me?

Louise has settled down to her usual mode of life, at least to all appearance, so that, seeing her going about the same things as formerly, I sometimes catch myself forgetting that times are so changed. Only I never see her read; whence I prognosticate that she is too much engaged with her own thoughts to find pleasure in those of others. She rises later; when up, she joins me; we chat, she takes up some sort of needlework, then retires to her chamber, and takes a walk afterwards when evening comes. Some ladies who are here have sought her company, and, when received by her, have retired, full of that affection which she imparts to all around her; nevertheless if in truth she does not keep them at a distance, she shuns rather to meet them. Instead of taking pleasure

* The expression, "*You know not all that I know about this young man.*"

as formerly, in passing the evening out of doors, she retires early, sometimes alone, sometimes with Martha. I am then left by myself, and gloomy ideas do not fail to beset me.

What gives me most uneasiness is to see, notwithstanding the air which is fresh, and the walking which gives exercise, how little food she takes. The proof shows less in her face than in her neck and shoulders, where I think her fallen away. Without being plump, she was never thin; and yet now without appearing changed, she looks more frail. Martha, who undresses her, assures me that I am not mistaken, and that such a dress which fitted tight upon her is now too wide. All this is cruel to me, Monsieur Prevere, but still less so however than certain signs which I remark round the eyes, though I dislike to look at them. There is at the corner of the eye a skin so fine and so stretched that the vein, being seen through it, forms as it were bluish patches, denoting in my idea pain of mind, and wasting away of the body. Theresa had this sign. Is this resemblance in face to her mother? is it symptoms of fragile growth? All these things urge me on to seek the advice of some skilful physician, if there is one to be met with among those fine talkers whose language appears to me adorned and ornamented, by reason that their knowledge is small and confined.

You tell me to talk to her about Charles. I have done so, but, in truth, not without constraining myself by a strong effort of will, and without any inclination to return to it. With what I know now, this name is a horror to me. In order to talk of him in an easy and indifferent manner, I ought to know nothing of his frightful stains, when even without this I should have difficulty so to express myself, that, in the language I might use, the girl should not discover that old grudge, that repugnance of instinct, which I never could overcome, and which still even now opposes the compassion, although real, which this unfortunate excites within me. I am stiff-necked, Monsieur Prevere; my disposition is slow and obstinate, my instinct strong, my idea upright, but with no more suppleness than the bar of the wine-press. So that, if I reason, if even I blame myself, if I want to change, I feel

nevertheless, below this surface, a weight, a heaviness, which nothing can remove, which never stirs, which pulls me down to it, whatever desire I may have to get away. So shall I be on the day of judgment one of those who will have fought but made no progress, and it is for this that I rely upon the merits of our Lord, mine being only in the germ, and in the will more than in the deed.

It was the other day that I spoke to her of him, on occasion of your letter. We were walking through those ravines, in the same direction that she always takes me, beyond Eseri to a place which they call the Rocky Plain. It is well named: an immense tract enclosed by woods and hills, where not a tree shades the ground, but only rocks which lie scattered here and there over the coarse grass. Louise is fond of this spot apparently because not a living soul is to be met with there. On the way, I had it upon my lips to speak to her of Charles; it took me two hours before I could set about it; and when I did, she became so agitated that I was not tempted to dwell long upon the subject. Nevertheless, she learned with satisfaction that he is allowed to continue his studies for the profession of minister, and that he is well enough to set out. When I had said this, I was relieved and disposed to talk of other things; but now it was she who was troubled in her turn and remained silent. The return was sad; the night a bad one, as Martha told me.

But I am not much surprised at these things, so soon after getting such a severe shock. It is time which, after God, is the great physician of souls; and the course of time none can hasten. Here is Louise, afflicted, but not suffering in body; and if the mind were to become easy, the body could recover along with it. It is on this hope that I live, it is in it that I wish to remain; or else what would become of me? Have no fear for my temper; misfortune and anguish have softened it, and I have none but myself to be churlish with for not bending under the grief that presses upon me.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

LXVII.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

General

WELL, my old one, here you are in safety! With a little aid, I have got you out of that gulf into the depths of which you were on the point of falling. Henceforth, away with fear, away with distrust, forget those bugbears, drink a cup, and fatten me up this duckling. A little of the firs, a little time, a little human nature, will drive away her childish sorrows, and give her back to you a new creature.

Look you, my poor friend, shut up as you are in your sacristy, you have lost the traditions: as for us, jostled about in the world, gay cavaliers not long since, we knew the stuff these young things are made of, and we are not to be taken in by their pretty phrases. More than one has made believe to die in despair, who, three months afterwards, cured of all complaint, thought of nothing but lovers and weddings, afresh. You remember Rose, the first that I asked? Her father refused, by reason of the property which I had not, and the poor girl vowed that, life being henceforth worth nothing to her, she would make away with herself; more by token that they watched her closely for above a week. Well, it was this same Rose, who, six months afterwards, married Berthoud the carpenter! That one may die of grief, is possible; but to die of love, such a thing was never seen. They weep for a sweetheart, and very right too, but only till another turns up. In all, the heart is fickle, and the fancy changeable, and the song is right which says:

" 'Tis true she weeps, 'tis true she sighs,
But 'tis for him who meets her eyes,
Or stays not long away."

Your Louise will be like the rest.

However, Reybaz, it is for you to take care that, having once escaped from the net, she does not get entangled again unless under good colours; and in my opinion, made as she is, you, as a sensible and affectionate father, ought to look closely to it. Education changes our being, refines

our manners: hers has imparted to her sentiments and ideas to which one of our condition would not respond. If girls are fickle and change a lover rather than die, still you scarcely ever see genteel ones take an awkward ungainly fellow, or refined ones choose a clown. If one does so, it is well for a time; but, when love ceases to blind, she begins to see clear; then come disagreements; they are two enemies, who have been joined together during their sleep; on awaking they recognise each other, fall to wrangling and fighting, till at last the chain breaks. Yours has been made a delicate creature, a girl of sentiment, a lady in short; it is a gentleman therefore that she requires; not a contraband gentleman, like the other, whose stain is the more visible by reason that he counterfeits respectable people; but a gentleman of the right stamp, a notable, sure of his parents, of handsome person, suitable manners, and having plenty of money. This last point girls care nothing about: "two hearts and one cottage," says the song; but it is for ancients to care about it for them. Without money, how keep the pot boiling?

So, to tell the truth, Keybaz, this is the fear that still sticks to me—to wit, that you will have trouble to meet with the man you want, for it is not usual that strangers come to a village to take a wife; and then your daughter might not be in the humour to leave you all and her own home, even if a gentleman from town should come forward. Here then is the knot of the affair at present. Luckily there is no hurry, and time brings counsel—without reckoning on the good God, who watches over honest folk as you may have seen without tiring your eyes. Only beware of giving yourself up again to the pastor: distrust his way of seeing things, if not his intentions. Recollect that, quite charitably, he was leading you to perdition, and not so innocently as you might possibly suppose; for I doubt me that he knew more about this lad than he chose to tell—in which case his intention, good as it might be, was worth nothing. Recollect that these men from their calling fancy themselves little Providences, whom other people must satisfy, please, worship, or else they are not fit to throw to the dogs; that, always acting in the name of Heaven, they dispose of our little

affairs in their own fashion, and that, in their eyes, good or evil means what hurts or serves the church. Recollect too, that, from their calling also, they fear youth as inconsiderate, wealth as the source of all evil, renown as vanity; so that, if you take this one for your adviser, he will keep you aloof from a son-in-law who would insure a brilliant lot to your daughter, to draw you towards some starved wretch who will live upon your substance. Is it not this, even taking this Charles for a lawful child, that he was aiming at?

Be on your guard, Keybaz—it is your daughter that is here at stake. Believe me, me who have saved you, me who am an ancient, an obscure person like yourself, of the same class, fortune, and condition, and by these titles better qualified to judge rightly of your affairs and to give you a sure and affectionate advice. Be on your guard; and the more, that your Prevere is an able preacher, and the lustre of words throws a glitter over his bad reasons, whereas the roughness of mine takes away from their goodness. Mistrust yourself in that, honoured as you feel, and justly, by the friendship of a pastor, you are the more disposed to acquiesce in what he says; and because the word of a great man, without being of more value, weighs heavier than that of a low one. Be on your guard, above all, because I have in my hands a letter from him, in which he curses me, in which he excommunicates me, in which he gives me to the devil, for having enlightened you. Is that the letter of a man who has at heart your interests alone? or is it that of a man who cannot forgive me for having thwarted his? Who then is your best friend—he who saves you or he who leads you on to your ruin?—he who finds out what it behoves you to know, or he who, having it in his power to inquire just as well as myself and much better, does nothing, allows the affections of these two children to be engaged, well assured nevertheless that your daughter can only lose by it, and that his bastard will gain? Open your eyes, Keybaz. And if you believe that all this was only error, still it would have been a fatal one. Be on your guard!

By this letter he desires me to send him the papers relative to the young man: it is a present which I should

have made him without his asking for it; then he requests me not to breathe a word—as if one were going to injure an unfortunate person. I answered without arguing in any fashion, and in respectful terms, knowing that otherwise I should have given you pain. Besides, what was my object? To save you. It is done, without hurting any one but myself: what have I to be uneasy about now?

He sent off his young man on Friday. It was wise of him. What could he do here but vegetate, when once shut out from his studies? The only thing I regret is that I had him better under my hand to look after him upon occasion. Take care that from yonder he does not work underhand, and that no letter reaches your Louise through the hands of that Martha. The Derveys accompanied him to the coach. You would have thought it was the Brave Dunois "*Partant pour la Syrie*." Mark well that I was on the step of my door when they passed, waiting for the trifle of fee-money that forms my living—and with the greater reason, that his illness had not lessened my labour. I had my trouble for my pains. Of money, not a sous; of adieu, not an ounce more. He went past like a clown, as he is, and a stingy one to boot. But what one has not in one way, one must catch in another. He will receive a little account which I had no intention of troubling him with. What say you, Reybaz? While this proud blade refuses me my rightful fee, not a beggar goes up the stairs that he does not give something to, either money that he owes me, or clothes which ought to come to me by good right. No matter! here he is put to rout: a good journey to him!

CHAMPIN.

LXVIII.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

Mornez.

You are of my class, Champin, of my condition, but not of my nature. In this misfortune you find subject for mirth, and, when we ought to close the ranks, you strive

to disunite me from him who bears the heavier part of the burden along with me.

I have already told you, attack not this pastor. I have told you I would sooner think you malicious than him interested or treacherous, or take from him, in my thought, that charity which I know him to possess. I have told you, Champin, to spare your writing, or else to respect this pastor, in whose affection I desire to live and die. If he did not reveal anything to me in time, he was in the wrong and blames himself for it: that you have searched for, found, and brought to light the stain of this young man, is a thing in which you triumph; but the Supreme Judge is the Lord, whose ways are not our ways, and, to meet his judgments, which will one day overtake us, humility alone befits us, when, even were it otherwise, joy and boasting ought not to be mingled with sinister and gloomy things.

I cannot find, for my part, Champin, that the lustre of words throws a glitter over bad reasons; and the more words I see used in supporting a case, the more I suspect it of being equivocating and two-sided. You talk of the rudeness of your speech. I find it, for my part, not sufficiently simple and discreet. If it is rude, it is in appearance; and the language of the pastor, although less faulty no doubt, shows also less artifice. If it is abundance of reasons and emphasis of words that give weight to discourse, you seem to me to have the better of him; but if it is goodness of heart and weight of character, it is M. P'revere who excels. This man is too high placed for your blows. When you aim them at him, you wound me without reaching him, and scare my affections from you.

These things, Champin, I say to you in friendship—galled as I am by your letter, and yet grateful for your services. My soul is full of anguish; there is no room left in it for bitterness and mistrust; and when you see with what great effort I keep my balance among so many evils which have come to pass or which threaten, do not jostle, but rather support me.

You speak at your ease of my Louise, Champin; I will dispense with your doing so. You hold remarks regarding her such as might suit ancients chatting freely together

around the table; and you mistake the matter. Here there is neither question of Rose nor any other: your traditions do not hit the mark. If the heart of this girl was fickle, and her fancy changeable, I would join in what you say; but if she is wounded in the wing, if she is perhaps still bleeding from her last wound, be certain that what may be said of a thousand cannot be said of her; that what applies to the common herd does not apply to her; and that thus, if it is criminal to speak with levity about sacred things, it is no less unfitting not to put on gravity and respect when speaking regarding this young creature. •

But where you are again mistaken is when you sing triumph, flattering yourself that you have saved me. You have saved me from shame, not from disaster. Louise is as miserable as before, and I fear much more so. With the same anguish, I have no longer that last remedy of restoring Charles to her. You have drawn me out of one gulf to set me on the brink of another, where I remain struggling, this time without any other hope than in a miracle of the good God. Have you acted well? No doubt, according to intention; but, in fact, you have lifted a veil which cannot be lowered again, when it would have been my salvation perhaps never to have raised it. This God alone knows. At any rate, amidst all this sinister doubt, spare yourself this triumph, and me these expressions of mirth, which are an outrage to my misery.

Your whole letter, and your counsels too, have gone against the grain with me. Not but that here I agree with you in many points; but when it is the preservation of my child that forms my only prayer, night and morning, what have I to do with arguments about the choice of a husband, and, in face of this alarm, how can I care about anything else? Should better times come, I will then think about these things. Even then it would be too soon; for, to confess the truth, although it would be for me a death of anguish to leave this child without a husband to shelter and protect her, how expect that she will ever incline to other affections, and give herself away a second time, after being so cruelly disappointed the first? May Heaven dispose her to it! It is my prayer; but, till then, why do you come talking to me about the sort of husband she

wants, about choices, about directions, about underhand dealings? Let this man whom she shall choose only be free from stain, and do not imagine that I will in that case reject him for being poor, or for being burgher or stranger? Adversity bends us, time brings change to our minds, misfortune and anguish lead us where we would fain not be. This Charles himself, but for that barrier of ignominy, do not imagine that it would be at this day his poverty, or my grudge, or my instincts, or your words, that would prevent me from giving him my Louise. I did so unwillingly in that note which you kept: at this hour I would do so with joy—I should see in it my salvation as well as my duty.

For the rest, I guess to what your letter tends; but without liking the roundabout way you take to incline me in favour of M. De la Cour. By speaking plainly, you had spared your paper, and I had listened to you the more willingly. M. De la Cour I rejected at the time, without M. Prevere having any hand in the matter, as you would make people believe; but for this sole reason, that I wished for a less dissipated and more homely husband for my daughter. But if he ever returned to the country and became steady as he grew older, and sought my Louise, the obstacle, be certain, would come from her before it would come from me. Just now he is running about through Italy with his mother, and that is not the road to the parsonage; when, even before, constancy was not his habitual virtue, nor his affection for Louise to the liking of his family. Be easy then upon that point, and use your pen for other purposes than to urge or to forewarn me respecting him.

Have care above all, Champin, to bridle your tongue in regard of this deplorable history. You are inclined to talk; and of those about you many, particularly Jaquemay, are wide awake who, on the least sign, would guess the worst, and nothing would prevent them from overwhelming this unfortunate. This would be creating a second calamity for him still more irreparable than the first. He is now transplanted to Lansanne, where they have admitted him to study: if but a word were uttered about the stock from which he springs, it would be all

over with him, and then what resource would he have left but to turn to bad ways like his parents, and upon a better pretext than they, since he would have been forcibly driven from the good one? Touch not then upon this young man, either little or much: say nothing about him, abstain from talking of him to me, let his memory be forgotten, let all trace of him be lost! And as for your rightful fee, of which he has disappointed you, I send it you herewith, to the end that on no pretext you intrude any more in what concerns him, and that you live as if you had never known him. As for the kind notice of which he disappointed you also, my opinion is that you had no right to expect it, having been his enemy from the first, and having crowned your work by this unlucky discovery which ruins him. You may tell me that he knows nothing about this; but the heart suspects, Champin, without knowing—it forebodes, as a dog before he sees the wolf scents that he is not far off. It would have been better for you not to have shown yourself as he passed, than for him to give any sign of friendship. So, once more, a truce on this point: let us strive to forget that this unfortunate ever came into the world to trouble us and to suffer in it himself.

REYBAZ.

LXIX.

M. PREVERE TO LOUISE.

The Parsonage.

THE days glide past, my dear child, and your absence is still prolonged. I wish, by writing to you, to cheat the impatience which I feel to see you again, and I wish also to induce you to write to me in return. This long silence on your part is the more painful to me inasmuch as it betrays your dejection, and as it deprives me of the pleasure of intercourse with you. I have heard of you from your father. He is not very unhappy; hope once more dawns upon his heart, and calmness seems again to spring up within it. But if I recognise in these symptoms the result of your filial tenderness, that result which you looked for

from your efforts and your sacrifices, I am only the more uneasy on your own account, and the more anxious to know if this good which you do him is purchased at too dear a price; or else if, which I hope is the case, you are beginning to share that calm which you have restored to him, and to taste of that sort of consoling courage which ever accompanies the accomplishment even of the most painful duties. Write to me, my dear child; conceal from me neither your sufferings nor your torments. Do not deprive me of the sweetness of affording, if in my power, some balm to your wounds.

I have read Charles's letter, which you sent me. I thank you, Louise, for this communication. You have afforded me an opportunity of mingling my tears with yours, and of contemplating in my Charles that elevation, that uprightness of feeling, which I knew he possessed, but which might, under such circumstances, have given way beneath the attacks of despair. It has not been so; it will not be so. In noble souls, trials bring to light what happiness might have left hidden; they make an appeal to the difficult virtues, and these virtues answer to the summons. Charles has shown himself worthy of you, my dear child, and I doubt not he will follow that example of courage and moderation which you will not fail to give him. How I should like here to recur to his letter; but it is a constraint I think it right to impose upon myself, not to awaken emotions whose sources ought to be dried up.

But, Louise, you reproach yourself most unjustly, when you accuse yourself of abandoning this friend, "accomplice that you are of a cruel world, and sharer as you are in a detestable prejudice." These reproaches cloak a feeling which is a sad one indeed for you; its bitterness is thrown back on your father, on myself, who now join in his views without my being willing, assuredly, to plead guilty to that complicity of which you speak. Your heart leads you astray; your generosity, your regrets, your very modesty, conspire against you, my child. You are submissive to your father, as it is your duty to be; you sacrifice to his anxiety for your happiness all that really formed it. Ah! far from being an accomplice, you would be a victim, were

it not from your own free will, and in voluntary obedience to the suggestions of duty and of filial tenderness, that you renounce your cherished hopes. There remains now only your father to be considered. Shall I take the trouble of justifying him in your eyes? God forbid! If he is an accomplice of anything, it is, Louise, you are aware, equally with myself, of his tenderness, for you—of the alarms which your future welfare causes him—of certain impressions which are deep-rooted in his nature, and which have been strengthened by Charles's defects or his imprudent conduct. But, "a sharer in detestable prejudices?"—No, no, Louise. For a long time, he partook of them in common with all the inhabitants of the village; but from that day on which he hearkened to in church, the appeal of charity—from that day he shook off their yoke; he held himself on his guard against them; and other motives thenceforth regulated his conduct. And, think you, Louise—think you, my dear child, that I, his friend—yours—Charles's protector—that I should have recoiled before the obstacles of a simple prejudice; that I should have consented to see you become its victim; that I should not, at my risk and peril, have combated to the last moment a barbarous maxim; that, lastly, I should have purchased your father's friendship, however dear it might be to me, at the price of an acquiescence in my eyes base and criminal?

Banish, therefore, my dear child, these bitter thoughts; do not envenom the wound already so painful; listen, rather, to what can soothe, if not close it. Our young friend is that which he promised you to be; he has not allowed himself to be borne down. Encouraged by you to follow the profession of the sacred ministry, he advances towards it with ardour; he lends his assistance to overcome the obstacles in his way; and, by his own efforts as much as by mine, behold him admitted, since yesterday, to follow at Lausanne his theological studies. This is a great happiness, on which I had not ventured to reckon, and which secures to him henceforth a sure and honourable livelihood. We shall hereafter know better if it be advisable that he be consecrated at Lausanne or here; both these ways are open to him. In the mean time, he is ap-

preciated and loved there; I have received, from some of my colleagues at Lausanne, letters which display a feeling of interest and esteem for this amiable young man. I recognise in him, as you do, natural talents on which I found great hopes, joined to that impetuosity of feeling and that imprudence, which, when regulated and tempered by age, will turn to a gentle and vivifying warmth. He has animation and nobleness of thought; his style, still incorrect but not false, is wanting neither in those features which captivate, nor in that ample command of language which is necessary for a preacher. But, above all, what birth, what life, what misfortunes, are better calculated than his to compensate for, so early in life, that experience, that judgment, that knowledge of the world, of its injustice, of its trials, of its misery, and also, Louise, of its most heavenly joys, without which a minister of Christ is unfitted for his task; without which he feels not, without which he speaks not from his heart; without which, more under the dominion than any other of the prejudices which are peculiar to him, he preaches according to tradition, he is a man of the church more than a man of Christ, the constituted judge of his neighbour rather than his brother! Poor child! in that very letter which he wrote to you, I could not help remarking, with a satisfaction deeply tinged by bitterness, that precocious knowledge of men, that struggle between humiliation and pride, that torrent of feeling and emotion, which, when tempered by elevation of heart, seem to me, as it were, the first fruits of future eloquence, persuasive, winning, but—alas!—most dearly purchased!

Let the prospect of this future which awaits our friend in the holy career in which he is now engaged, be to you a subject of consolation, Louise. Let it lighten that feeling of pity which mingles with your regret; and, if you fix your eyes on his present situation, endeavour to look upon it less as a subject of compassion than it appears to you now. The sentiments which he expresses to you are sincere; I find them repeated in the letters which he writes me. Do not, then, view them as a mask which he uses to cloak discouragement or despair. His greatest misfortune is, not to have lost you, but to have troubled

your lot; your letter is for him a fountain of blessings; he draws from it by turns life and consolation. He finds there, traced by your hand, the rule of life which he wishes religiously to follow, and the marks of your esteem, of your affection, sustain him, vivify him, rejoice him. If I could transmit to him the announcement that your days are more serene, that you are recovering your health and strength—happiness—yes, Louise, happiness—I conscientiously assure you, would once more dawn in his heart. What shall I add, or rather, ought I to tell you such things? This assurance, “that your heart can be given only once,” transports, intoxicates him: it is sufficient to charm away his misery, to give to his resignation the warmth of life and the animation of courage.

Louise, my child—my dear child—let these testimonies have an influence on your heart, and let them chase from it trouble and bitterness. Return, return back to peace. Let that lofty reason which distinguishes you, that religious and gentle submission, the sole remedy for cutting wounds, here display itself in all its radiance. Consider the blessings which still remain to you, the blows which you have been spared. Consider that for us all—I do not even except Charles—there still remain a thousand blessings to enjoy, if only peace is in any degree restored to you, if only your affliction is rid of a burden too heavy for your strength, if only, after so many shocks, a tranquillity, although uncheering, spring up within you—you on whom depend all our joy and all our happiness. Confide in me; listen to my counsels. Trial, you are aware, is no stranger to me; I have experienced cruel suffering. Well, Louise, determination, effort, prayer, hope, duty, the affections which were still left me, others which sprung up, have cicatrized the wounds; and more than ever shall I bless existence if, as I trust, God shall grant that it be the same with you and with my Charles.

I have to announce to you, my dear child, a sad piece of intelligence. Poor Brachoz, who had seemed to be recovering from the effects of his fall, after having dragged out for the last month or two a miserable existence, has just sunk under his sufferings. This man was, notwithstanding his being subject to habits of intoxication, beloved

—and justly so—in the hamlet. He was ever-ready to do a service, more generous than our peasantry usually are, and capable of going any length for a friend. It was he, you may remember, who, at the risk of his life, made his way into the Widow Crozat's stable, in the midst of the flames, and succeeded in saving her only cow; it was he who alone offered himself to descend into the well where Paul Rouget was lying, and who drew him out from beneath the rubbish. He bore his illness with resignation, and on many occasions when I visited him, he expressed of his own accord, repentance for his excesses, and acknowledged his weakness with touching humiliation. During these last few days, he charged me to thank you for your goodness towards him and his family; and, whilst regretting that you were absent from the parsonage at present, he begged me to speak to you in favour of his wife, whom, in truth, he leaves in great poverty.

I have endeavoured, Louise, to attend to all your recommendations with regard to your pensioners. The abundance of the crops and the high price of labour have rendered my task easy and assistance but little necessary. But, with most, I perceive that they attach even a higher value to your visit than to your largess, and there is nothing but question on the top of question to know when you will return. I have handed from you to Pauline Roset the communion veil and the little psalm-book; the poor child was out of her wits with joy, and her father and mother, seeing her so nicely dressed, shed tears of gratitude. She was received along with seven others, and, in the afternoon, I met them all at the parsonage, as I had done the boys. But this time I felt your absence more than ever; and, in truth, I was rather at a loss to know how to treat this flock of little girls. They played together in the garden, where I had a little collation set out for them; then, in the evening I walked about and chatted with them, and was much gratified with the dispositions which the dear little things displayed. One among them, Charlotte Combat, seems rather inclined to enthusiasm; but, as there is nothing here to afford food for this disposition, it will, I trust, be but passing. On our return we met your little orphan, who stared at Pauline with all

her eyes. I promised her from you that she should have the same, if she continued to be a good girl and to please her patrons. This little thing is most winning. She is full of candour and gratitude, one of those happy and easy dispositions which are developed equally in every condition of life, because they are everywhere pleasing. I was much gratified to see that, in the village, far from being jealous that she is your *protégée*, by title, they all welcome her with affection, and make her, on every occasion, a sharer in their pleasures. The other day, there was a great feast at the Redards', on the occasion of some anniversary; the little one happened to pass with her two goats; they called her in, just as she was, and gave her her tiny share, which she discussed in the midst of them. Conduct of this nature rejoices me; and above all, inasmuch as they did not give her these dainties as one does to a mendicant, to go and eat them apart, but that they in some sort associated her in their family repast. How much taste, how much tact and goodness is there, Louise, in everything which proceeds from the heart!

Remember me, I beg, to M. Reybaz and Martha. Tell the latter that we have given all her hemp to the Widow Crozat to spin, agreeably to her directions; and that this poor woman made her appearance yesterday again at the church. She had told me beforehand on Thursday, bursting into tears and saying with touching simplicity that she could not bear any longer to be *quarrelling* with the Almighty. I congratulated her on this return to feelings in which alone she could find consolation, and she retired as if relieved of a great sorrow, and thanking me for having always visited her, notwithstanding her errors. Tell your father that his substitute gives me satisfaction, and that his style of singing is regulated in such a manner as no longer to give me uneasiness.

Finally, my dear child, receive the tenderest expressions of affection from

Your affectionate

PREVERE.

LXX.

CHARLES TO M. PREVÈRE.

Lausanne.

Our classes have again opened, Monsieur Prevère. I endeavour to follow them; I go, I attend them, I return, and shut myself up in my chamber. Ah! my master, my respected master, if I am about to appear to you ungrateful and wanting in courage, do not nevertheless repulse me. Rather stretch out your hand towards me; hold me back on this declivity down which I feel myself gliding!

During the first few days, I felt more agitated but less unhappy. I attached a value to overcoming an obstacle which prevented me from fulfilling Louise's wish. The obstacle is now overcome; my career is open before me; I have no longer anything to do but to proceed in it; but I cannot, Monsieur Prevère. No aim—no hope—nothing but a profound disgust—nothing which fixes, which attracts, or which even occupies my mind. What can I study while regret and grief by turns swell and gnaw my heart? I hear, I write, I attempt to think on the subjects which are treated of before me. Sometimes I succeed, and then, when under the eyes of others, my suffering is repressed, my complaints smothered. Then I once more find myself alone: it was full time—my grief overflows, torrents of tears stream from my eyes—this chamber in which I shut myself up is a gloomy asylum, in which, far from you, far from all that is dear to me, my days waste away in unavailing groans.

What shall I do, Monsieur Prevère? what have I promised? terror too has seized upon me. I must follow this career. Louise and yourself reckon upon me; and already I disappoint your wishes and your hopes. Nevertheless, I wish to do—I wish it, my dear and respected master, but I cannot. The cup is too bitter—this burden too heavy for my strength—my broken heart has room for nothing but sorrow.

But, can I promise to follow a profession which it is a sin to devote one's self to if not called to it by a

peculiar vocation. Am I made to pierce through this veil of humiliation and degradation, which involves me in its folds? Can I undertake to set an example of virtues, when all the strength I have is scarcely sufficient to struggle with my unfortunate destiny? I may acquire learning, but what is learning in this holy profession? Is not the first and chief condition that talent in which I am deficient, or in default of it, that position in society which I shall never occupy? Miserable that I am, how, or in what way shall I make myself useful? Who would not disclaim my attentions, my counsels, my devoted services? who would not disclaim me—me, the foundling—marked with an indelible stain—me on whom weighs a mystery of infamy?—me, who am the child of—of whom, Monsieur Prevere? Is all even known? Have I nothing more to fear? Is there nothing still remaining behind that cradle which you draw towards you for shelter?—no new stain—no new and livid ulcer? Ah! let my bosom heave with sobs—let anguish and terror take possession of my heart—let them pierce it—let them wring it—it is my lot—it is my sole inheritance!

To tell you these things, my dearly beloved master, is to rend your heart also; but then to conceal them from you for ever! They gnaw me—they give me up as a prey to the violence of hate, of pride, of murmuring, of a thousand evil passions—they make me writhe upon my bed, and accuse both heaven and man. I was so happy! Sheltered beneath your wing, I tasted such sweet security—I had so little to fear—to foresee—to alarm me, and then to be struck thus, and dashed from supreme felicity into this gloomy abyss! Seized by the hand of death, in the midst of transports, and in all the intoxication of happiness! Ah! Monsieur Prevere, it is true then that I have lost Louise—Louise, the most heavenly of beings, and, nevertheless, the only one who deigned to love me! I lived upon her affection; I lived upon her words; upon the sight of her; I existed only by her, and for her. This promised union was my buckler—my stay—my courage. No! it is not happiness alone that I have exchanged for a frightful misfortune—I have lost also my strength, my resources, the breath which formed my

whole being—all that other men drink from a thousand sources which are forbidden to wretches such as I.

What will become of me, Monsieur Prevere? Shame alone ties me down to these studies. I have sworn—but, in my inward heart I feel that I am already a perjurer. I pray to God—I seek strength from Him—I wait in hope—but the days glide away, and each adds to my disgust. I long to fly—to go to some far country—to conceal my existence—to relieve you of one who has only troubled your life, who can never make any return for the blessings which you have showered down upon him, or any amends for the grief in which he has steeped your tender and affectionate heart. This—this, my dearly beloved master, is the crowning blow to my misery! One last hope would have sustained me—I have it no longer. Doomed to misfortune and disgrace, my sorrow will ever weigh heavily on those who love me; and the only one among men to whom I owe all, is the only one whose days I have poisoned, and whose declining life I have shortened!

These ideas beset me. I blush for myself—for my ingratitude—for my nothingness. In these stormy emotions, will my heart be degraded?—will you be able to recognise me? To fly from you, Monsieur Prevere! Alas! what have I become! Fly from you! It is the first time that this horrible idea has occurred to me. Can I do so? No! A thousand times, no! And yet it masters me—it appears to me a matter of necessity—nay, even of duty. I confess these things to you with trembling and shame—and with a heart torn by sorrow. But I confess them to you, because they are so, and because you are my father—my venerated and beloved master; I confess them to you, because in so doing I lessen their dominion over me; because, in seeking to seize your hand in the midst of the darkness in which I am plunged, I do the only thing which can still preserve me from evil—which can still defend me against myself!

I know nothing of Louise—absolutely nothing! And yet—ah! Monsieur Prevere—if her days have become calm, if her strength returns, or if you are without alarms and full of hope respecting her, then conceal from me if

you will all that passes on that Mount Salève, whose blue summits from this spot rivet my look. But if it was otherwise! Would you conceal it from me? Would you hinder me from hastening—from flying to her side?—from throwing myself at M. Reybaz's feet, and obtaining from his tears, his affright, or his remorse, what he has refused to my prayers, to my despair? Say, say, my well-beloved master, would you do so? Is this last and sad resource still left to me; or must I then, even without making an attempt, see Louise crushed and broken against the inflexible will of a heartless father!

A shudder runs through my frame—grief makes my mind wander. Pardon me, my dear master—I shall subdue myself, I shall shape myself after your counsels—after your example. Have pity on your

CHARLES.

LXXI.

M. PREVERE TO CHARLES.

The Parsonage.

YES, your letter has grieved me—it has pierced my soul. I blame this weakness mingled with storms of passion, this prompt abandonment of resolutions which ought to be sacred to you. Yes! I deplore this base discouragement, these insensate projects. These are neither the expressions, nor the sentiments, nor the wishes of my Charles—of him whom I esteem, whom I cherish in my inmost heart. Arise, Charles! banish this languor, this violence, these unworthy transports! Learn that you cannot be ungrateful towards me except in deceiving the expectations which I have formed of your virtues. Learn that it is trial which displays the man and the Christian; and, that if your misfortune is great, the first and sole remedy to apply to it, is to resign yourself with dignity in pressing on to the accomplishment of duties which still remain to you, or to which it gives birth.

But you are my child. I pity your sufferings. I excuse this momentary delirium; and in order to speak to you any language but that of the tenderest affection, it

requires me to do the most painful violence to my feelings. Charles, my child, return to your former self! I do not recognise you in these lines. On reading them, my tears flow; not those tears which are consoling to me to shed in common with you, but bitter tears—bitterer far even than those which your misfortune itself wrings from me. In fact, there are some things sadder still, still more to be feared, than misfortune. It is when the transports of the heart and the disorder of the passions stifle the intellect and the reason; it is when a kind, upright, amiable character is wanting to itself, hurls back recriminations, becomes embittered and unjust, and delivers itself up to the dominion of impulses which it can no longer master, and the violence of which it makes no effort to moderate. Return to yourself, my dear boy. Take once more the rudder of your soul, which you have left to float at the mercy of the waves. Wash out every trace of this the first sorrow you ever caused me. Yes, Charles, the first! For your grief I share in; your imprudence, your want of reflection, I excuse; but that which gives the lie to the character and deceives esteem, I feel with deep and acute pain.

I am astonished neither at your sufferings nor your disgusts, nor at that torpor of mind which you experience in your studies; but I ask you, my dear boy, to persevere and conquer; I ask of you to think that, whilst you conduct yourself as you are doing, I, on my side, console Louise, by telling her of your courage and your future prospects, henceforth assured. I ask of you to give the lie neither to my language nor to your own, nor to deceive the expectations of this angelic girl. I ask of you not to aggravate in any way a situation already so miserable, so hard to bear, and the fatal issue of which cannot be doubtful if you succumb under the trial. Lastly, Charles, I ask of you to remember the commandments from on high, to show me that you understand, that you respect them; and that that religion which is in you is not a barren seed, which, without roots in the soil, is scattered by the first storm, but that it is a fruitful germ which has grown up beneath serene skies and bears blossom in the hour of trial,

This, my dear boy, is my advice, these are my counsels. They will, I am certain, sink deep into your heart to strengthen and to change it. After this shall I discuss, one by one, the sophisms which your letter contains? No, Charles, that would be to doubt your judgment, which cannot have waited for these lines to resume its wonted uprightness, or else your filial docility, over which my wishes will, I know, have more influence than my reasonings.

But, if I wish not to discuss these sophisms, I do wish to make known to you my opinion on a certain point respecting which I have not hitherto felt at liberty to do so. It would have been difficult, in fact, to speak to you about the choice of a career without in so doing directing your reflections to the subject of your birth, and this I felt a deep repugnance to do before age had formed your judgment and religion prepared your heart. To-day, my dear child, it is time to abandon these precautions; circumstances demand it, your age permits it, and religion has taken up its abode in your heart. Charles, at all times, even in your earliest years, on considering what was your position in this world, I desired to see you engaged in the profession of the sacred ministry. When age had developed your character, I desired it still more; when I saw both your faults and the nature of the talents which God had committed to your charge, what was before hope was changed into a lively desire. I applauded myself a thousand times for having directed your ideas and your education towards this point. I never conversed with Louise on this subject; but a fine and precocious judgment and an anxiety for your welfare, as tender as it was enlightened, were destined subsequently to induce her to form the same wish that I had myself done. Well, if, actuated by these motives, which I now disclose to you, and independently of the beauty of this calling, independently of Louise's wishes, I have judged at all times that this career was most suitable to you of many; to-day, I judge that it is the only one suitable to you of all others.

And in this, Charles, I do not look merely to your worldly welfare; I have not in view merely the safety of your soul. That safety is, in my mind, much more difficult

of attainment for a pastor than even for the sheep of his flock. I have at heart, I have in view, your repose, my child, an honourable and happy position in this world. Yes! I feel with all the bitterness of my soul, these pangs of your wounded pride, this legitimate rebellion against the prejudices which attack you, this misfortune of being without parents and without family, and I long that these stings may be blunted, that this misery be turned into peace, into virtue, into gentle harmony. If I do not share this irritation which I meet with, and which I excuse in you; if I look upon this world, with which you are indignant, as being thoughtless rather than cruel, as being vain rather than inhuman, I know, my dear child, I know that it has been harsh to you, that it will be so again, and I wish to withdraw you from its blows. For that purpose, go to Christ, look only to Him, for His sake live and serve your fellow-creatures; go and make, in His name, a sure and certain conquest of their esteem and their affection. This master is mine also; I know him; I know better than you how he keeps his promises; and I repeat to you with conviction, with authority, with tenderness, go to Him!

And, in fact, Charles, cast your eyes around you, examine the different careers which are open to your ambition, and tell me in which of them will you find more easily that refuge which your misery requires? Show me in which of them you would not be exposed to consume your strength without attaining to that tranquil summit beyond which peace and happiness will dawn upon your soul. Deprived of the blessings most widely bestowed, what will you have, in order to succeed in the world, but the advantages which you would have to seek from it itself, and which it would grant disdainfully, if it would not refuse them with harshness? What support would you have but its fragile favour, its capricious benevolence, whilst its vanity, ever the same, its pride, ever ready to wound, its prejudices, ever blind and cruel, would oppose to you at each step insurmountable obstacles. Ah! do not bind yourself to this master, my child. Rather, far rather, go to the Lord of the humble, of the lowly, of the disinherited. Be His faithful servant, and

then, the lower you are placed in the opinion of men, the more Heaven has apportioned to you provocations, trials, and unmerited obloquy, the more also will you be freed from worldly shackles, the more will you be free in its ministry, true in its humility, and sincerely charitable. Your light will shine before God, who will give you true contentment, and that happiness which is independent of the world; your light will shine before men, who will refuse you neither their hearts, nor their esteem, nor their homage, be assured, Charles; for not only do all men love, esteem, and honour devoted attachment, charity, and virtue, but, moreover, all, and even the powerful of the earth themselves, are benevolent, just, and respectful towards him who asks nothing from them of their frivolous goods, who envies not their advantages, who threatens not their interests. A fair career, my child, for lofty souls; a position worthy of envy, worthy of effort, for hearts which cherish a noble ambition. For, all obscure as it may be, and as it must be, it does not the less tower above, in independence and elevation, that of monarchs themselves; and the only rock I know of in its course—a real, a treacherous rock—is that pride which springs so quickly from every elevated position and every duty fulfilled.

If I now turn to examine your character, I rejoice, my child, to see you engaged in a career where your good qualities may develop themselves to the advantage of your fellow-men, and where your defects will be corrected, will be tempered, will be turned, for the most part at least, into beneficent germs. This impetuosity, Charles, this imprudent vehemence, the source of almost all your past faults—those transports, which lead you astray—this dejection, as violent in you as anger itself in another—what is there to hinder them from dashing you down, and us with you, into an abyss, if not of vice, at least of vile and irreparable deeds, if they are not bridled by a curb sufficiently strong, and at the same time sufficiently gentle, to subdue and regulate them? And what want they also to become fruitful warmth, generous passion, vigour, heroism, and ennobling charity, but to be placed under the banner of religion, and in the service of Christ, our glorious Redeemer?—but to be

employed in following his footsteps, and walking after his example? They are now your defects; but they may become your virtues; for happy, Charles, are they whose souls, in place of a barren torpor, are filled with bubbling and overflowing sap—happy they who feel keenly, happy they whose hearts are susceptible of trouble, of anguish, of vehement transports, and burning tenderness. Happy are they if they vow themselves to the Lord. They will be active, skillful, victorious soldiers; for strength abounds within them—love is theirs to aid, to correct, to raise up, to succour, to combat; and what is to be deplored is far less that this noble flame, kindled or turned aside by the stormy breath of earthly tempests, should mark its passage by some traces of havoc, than that it should not exist or should be totally extinguished. God, you are aware, God himself rejects the lukewarm—he is more forgiving to the wandering than to the torpid.

You have read, my dear boy, our Saviour's life. Have you not recognised in it, beneath that austere and sweet calm which belongs only to a divine soul in which all is beauty and moral harmony, that vivifying warmth, that fire of ardent passion—if I dare use the expression—without which we would be less enabled to comprehend his boundless charity? Do you not see in it that warmth which lends to all his words, to his consolations as to his reproaches, to his precepts as to his prophecies, to his simplest parables as to his most stirring addresses, a secret and insinuating charm, an authority threatening to the hardened—gentle to the afflicted—full of succour to the fallen—full of sweetness and attraction to the humble and faithful servant? Well, we, the ministers of this divine master, cannot doubtless possess any of his qualities without their being subject, from the effect of our weakness, of our corruption, or else merely through their want of agreement and harmony, to a thousand imperfections; but is that to say that without them we can serve him efficaciously; is that to say that because in us evil is always mingled with good, we are not to esteem that good; that because we abuse our strength we ought to prefer torpor; that because passion may momentarily lead us astray it ought to be rejected—placed

beneath passive inaction, sterile indulgence, and that sort of moral harmony which is not concord but an absence of all the virtues of the heart, as well as of those of the soul.

Therefore, learn to know yourself, my child, and in place of allowing that strength which is in you to waste away, to devour itself, to shake your soul until it has turned it aside from its course, or humbled it to the dust, much rather sanctify it by the object to which you apply it, and give it free scope to act. In so doing, you will find a spring of virtue and an aliment of happiness; for it is noble, Charles, it is honourable and full of charm, to carry vigour and vehemence into the exercise of charity. When young, you may fail through excess of zeal, but this zeal is only too much tempered by riper years, and of this wealth something, at least, is always retained for old age; since, after all, it is an imperfection of our poor nature that at one time it requires an excess, in order, at another, to have what is necessary, in order that the snows of age, which seize upon the body, cover not the entire soul beneath their inert and barren coldness. Throw yourself, therefore, into this heady fight of evils, of sorrows, of catastrophes, in which your brethren struggle for mastery, and then, under the eye of God, be the man of all!

You will then have found your proper place—met your true vocation—assured your happiness. Then you will live your own life; and this world, this selfish, this thoughtless, this disdainful world, which now repulses you, my poor boy, this world you will commiserate—you will love as being fickle, miserable, worthy of compassion, far more than you will hate it as harsh or fear it as powerful. This world!—you will soon recognise that its homage is almost as vain as its contempt; that to triumph over it is an inglorious victory, a savourless reward; that without the soul which knows itself in the way of life, and, above all, without Jesus, who sees and loves us, it would be little, it would be nothing, to have brought the whole earth to the feet of one's virtues!

You speak of talents which are refused you; and, in so doing, you must mean those talents which adorn a preacher, and which make him shine with flattering distinction. Even on this point I might reassure you, my dear child,

by telling you that I augur well of yours. But I should wound your modesty by doing so, and not the less lead you astray with respect to the stress which should be laid upon these exterior adornments—on this dazzling garb in which some privileged men clothe their thoughts. Let me rather tell you that it is deceiving yourself to aspire to it as to a thing essential, and that to strain after it is a certain way to miss its attainment. True talents, real brilliancy, in a word, Charles, eloquence—is not in the exterior covering but in that which the covering wraps. It is not in that outward form, the cut and proportions of which rhetoricians flatter themselves they succeed in pointing out. . It is in the thought itself, in the heart; it is from it and through it that it borrows its form, not always dazzling, but always suitable to the subject—highly coloured, touching, and ever finding a ready opening to the heart.

Now, it is by an absurd error, my dear boy, that the heart, even looking at it in the light of art, is believed to be little susceptible of culture or development. The heart, like the speech, is developed, is kindled, grows and strengthens by exercise; action gives it tact and experience; the fulfilment of duties gives it dignity and seriousness; struggles exalt its sentiments and increase its force; misfortune, if it does not embitter, purifies it; it enriches it with melancholy, with pity, with depth, with sensibility—warm, penetrating, irresistible. He who said that great thoughts came from the heart—he who said that to have tasted required to have soul, included in these two aphorisms the whole theory of eloquence; and if he had added, “Cultivate this heart, therefore, by the practice of the difficult virtues; cultivate this soul—not by empty studies, by barren precepts, by precocious essays in prose or in poetry, not by learning, but by the practice of goodness”—he would have given the briefest, the most complete, and at the same time the most luminous and most fruitful of treatises.

I might bring this home to you closer, by showing you many ministers of Christ whose preaching is without solidity, without action, without power—not because it is wanting in elegant or happy forms, but, on the contrary,

precisely because it has only these—because it is turgid, hollow, empty, as their lives. But I prefer to place before your eyes other examples. You know M. Laurent, that young man who is already honoured by the church, as she honours her oldest and most valiant soldiers; you know his success in preaching, and how he takes possession of those who listen to him, as if he seized them by the girdle and drew them towards him. Well, his studies were attended by no distinction, his debut excited no hopes, his composition was cold, his voice husky and commonplace. Ordained a minister he vegetated for some years, solely occupied with polishing his discourses and seeking for talent in the study of art and in the secrets of rhetoric. He became a flowery preacher, and was cited as an example of the inefficacy of rules to form him whom heaven has not gifted with the genius of the orator, when he was appointed to a curacy in the Canton.

Here, for the first time, he entered on the practice of those duties and those sentiments which he had before preached upon hearsay. For the first time he closed his books, and, supported by a strong determination, he made himself a simple soldier of Christ. He attacked the breach; he presented himself, lavish of his strength and courage, wherever the enemy appeared, in that *melée* of sorrows, of evils, of vices, of wounds, which I mentioned to you just now, and which besiege human nature wherever it sets up its resting-place. He supported, he soothed, he consoled, he combatted, he overcame, and from this field of battle he came forth a different being and completely changed. He had forgotten, had unlearned that pomp of language, those arts of composition, on account of which he formerly laid claim to the honour of a frivolous success. He was no longer a rhetorician but a man; no longer an orator but a minister of the Lord; no longer a soldier on parade, but a warrior returned from the field of honour, embrowned by the rays of the sun, noble in his tattered garb of war, and proud of his wounds received in battle. In those men, in those women, in those young girls to whom he prepared to speak in the name of the living God, he no longer saw as formerly a circle of auditors, an assembly of intellects whose suffrages

he besought, but fathers, honourable or otherwise—spouses, chaste or led astray—girls, pure or exposed to vice—in all, brethren, whom he knew, whom he had visited, whose joys he had felt, whose sorrows he had shared, and all of whom he embraced with a common and lively affection. Then, rich in thought, in experience, in reason, in charity—then, advancing to the attack of living adversaries, he commenced that series of simple discourses so solid, so just in their application, so urgent in their motives, so animated in their turns of expression, in which that arrangement, and that ornament which he no longer sought after, arrived in its proper order, clear, warm, each called forth by the idea and each animated by feeling. His modest sermons roused anew a religious life in a flock, until then noted for its lukewarmness; they attracted the faithful from the neighbouring parishes, even those of the town, and they acquired for their author that renown for eloquence, manly, true, remarkable for its original traits, and not less remarkable for its vigour in striking, leading, captivating, and vivifying the soul.

This, Charles, is the true route, that which although by a circuitous way alone leads to those beneficent and glorious results. But those who aspire to acquiring the form without having the substance itself, possess a vain shadow. It is in this sense that I told you that to strain after it is a certain way to miss its attainment. However, if few only arrive at these results, the reason is that but few enter upon the paths which lead to them. M. Laurent, long before his success, although he appeared mediocre, at least showed himself persevering; and, if he was on a false route, he at least pursued it with constancy. When this strength of determination met objects worthy of it, it roused itself immediately to efforts better directed. But what can be expected from those who have not this determination? What can proceed from hearts which vegetate—from minds which slumber—from shepherds who mingle with the flock rather than lead them to the pastures, who occupy their places rather than fill them, and who cannot hope to find, from duties languidly performed, any but languid thoughts and sleepy discourses? Ideas! But where can they obtain them? Knowledge

of the world, love of their flocks, indignation, pity, vivid and holy joys, all those affections which give life and movement to a discourse, which give colouring to language, animation to gestures and features! Whence can they obtain them? Ah! it is to those that it belongs to adorn their discourses with all that they have learned from the art of rhetoric, in order to conceal under the display of a brilliant covering the shameful meagreness of their minds—in order to swathe the corpse in winding-sheets of purple! It is those whom it suits to proclaim that a man is born an orator, in order to excuse themselves for having done nothing to become so; to say that eloquence cannot be acquired, in order to avoid the difficulty and the pains of acquiring it.

But you, my dear boy, you will not imitate these negligent or unfaithful servants. To the strength and power which you have you will impose at the same time the yoke and the spur of resolution; and, placing them in the service of our divine Master, you will fulfil your vocation, and at the same time fulfil my dearest wishes—the only ones whose accomplishment will form the joy of my old age and the peace of my death-bed. May I, before that arrives, see you entering this haven; may I be permitted to see my Charles, after so many sorrows and reverses, at last reaching that happy region of faith and charity where the stings of misfortune are blunted, where all bitterness and harshness is dissipated; where the soul is not indeed insensible to terrestrial blessings, but from which it looks down upon them—from which it sees them approach or fly, without intoxication and without despair, and from which, at the supreme moment, it wings its way aloft towards the sky, full of hope, unburdened by regrets, and laden with good works!

Your tenderly affectionate

PREVERE.

LXXII.

MARTHA TO M. PREVERE.

Mornee.

M. LE PASTEUR made me promise to give him some news of us, and if they had been more pleasant to his goodness to hear, I would have been less tardy to content him. My last, although now of old date, since in it I told him of our arrival here, contained good tidings which have not come to pass, without my being able to tell the reason. In the car, M. Reybaz spoke as if decided to change his determination again, and to *hasten his reply* to you; and he wrote to you the following day. I thought, therefore, that joy was just about to break forth, when, to the silence which he kept was added, from that very day, a sadness deeper than before, and so miserable, that, although I had good cause, I did not venture to question him, and still less to use any entreaties. Monsieur le Pasteur himself would have scarcely ventured, so great was the grief of this poor father, and so plain it was that, chained down by a secret necessity such as his reserved habit renders him subject to, any question would have been misfitting and any entreaties cruel. I made none, therefore, and I took care not to give Mamselle Louise hopes which I saw plainly were taken to flight.

We therefore settled down here in the midst of this gloomy cloud, insomuch that the first day or two, for want of speaking to each other, every one drew to his own side without settling into any habit of orderly and domestic life; until, little by little, it returned, in such sort that our days at present, without being more cheerful, at least bring us more together.

It is about our young lady particularly that Monsieur le Pasteur wishes me to speak. But what can I say?—fearing equally to describe her as more ill than she appears, or more slightly attacked than I think her. Many a person, to see her at certain moments, would esteem her rather delicate of temperament than enfeebled by sickness. So handsome as she is, and so neatly attired, her good grace adorns everything; her air misleads; her

eyes deceive; and then, the very constraint she puts on herself when speaking to people, or when she fears a remark which would hurt her sorrow, colours her cheek with a deep red, which they take for the health of the mountains. But as for me, the poor servant of this heavenly young lady, I see other signs which show me that these are false. I am with her when she is alone; I witness her paleness and her low spirits; I am present at those moments when she throws off this constraint, like a heavy burden which some unfortunate wretch dashes to the earth; when she lays aside this air of cheerfulness like a mask which wounds her face; when her eyes become dim and flooded with tears; when, of all this artifice, there remains only that good grace which she can no more strip herself of than of her heavenly goodness.

Ah! Monsieur le Pasteur, I am present at her watchings—through her nights. I undress her..... Ah! how I weep with you, my worthy pastor. She has become so thin! I wished not to believe as long as I could; but her dresses are so wide for her that it is a terror for me every morning to begin to fasten them, thinking to see, at each time, that the hook plays easier. The other day that she surprised me weeping over this task, she guessed my thoughts, and she began to weep herself, without telling me the cause nor me asking it from her, for fear of bursting into tears and making still worse the foreboding which came over us both. Poor, dear angel! Poor creature, who, at that age when young girls are stoutest, sees herself wasted away with grief, and, I am certain, fears from it more grief for another than for herself. I have already taken in one of her dresses at the waist, not without trembling and tears. for I was alone; but as long as I have not undone this funeral-like task, anguish much more than hope will visit my heart.

As for her inward pain, I see the effects of it plainly in these things, and the signs of it every day; but more in guessing them than as, formerly, in learning them from herself. By reason of her faithful submission to her father, and of her wish to put the best face on things, in order the better to restore her health, and also not to waste away her strength, of which she has none to spare.

To keep up an appearance before M. Reybaz's eyes, she constrains herself also before me not to speak of her affection and her misery; choosing rather to suffer in silence than to risk discourses which would lead her on, from one thing to another, to a height of suffering which she would be less able to suspend or to conceal. Two or three times I spoke to her of M. Charles, in order to give her good news of him: she listened and seemed to feel deeply what I was saying, but without resting on it, without replying, and as if shrinking from the subject. And little as there was, it was enough to trouble her peace, during the whole day, as it happens now when any word, no matter how short, agitates her.

This place where we are settled is of the best for liberty and pleasure, if it is not that it is all mountain, and that the villagers are good-natured people rather than pleasant to see or to meet. There is at the back of the house a gallery which looks towards the great snows on the side next Mont Blanc, and below it is a little garden which is at our service; and not far off a wood ending in a mountain stream, from which the ground slopes up on the opposite side, where there is a common which they call the *Plaine des Rocailles*. It is there that I go almost every day with Mamselle. In the morning we breakfast in the gallery, when, to say the truth, we chat of one thing or another, for the purpose of not talking of that which is on our lips. After which we meet in the garden, or else walk until the heat of the day, when M. Reybaz, from habit, takes a sleep under the trees. It is at this time that, passing the *Viaison*, we proceed beyond *Eseri* and *Regny*, until we reach the *Plaine des Rocailles*, carrying with us some piece of work, which is for our young lady rather a pretext than a task; for she is then at her saddest, constraining herself indeed from speaking to me but not from remaining pensive or troubled; and often with the tears in her eyes, which fall against her will, and which I wipe away from her collar, where if M. Reybaz should happen to see them, they would give him mistrust. I do not ask our young lady, "why do you weep?" knowing only too well. Neither any more do I invite her to constrain herself, knowing that her tears are a

solace to her, and being grateful besides that to me alone she does not refuse the sight of them.

So we chat no more, if it is not I, to warn her of returning, and that she must compose herself, to the end that her eyes may not show that she has been weeping. Then starting as from a dream, she rouses herself by an effort, and her features assume, until the following day, an air which deceives even more than it rejoices us. On our return we dine, M. Reybaz looking at her face incessantly, and surprising on it, according to the days, signs which increase his inward trouble to such a point, that, ceasing to eat, he can scarcely keep his composure, and conceals his trembling behind his sadness. On these days the dinner being over, he retires into the wood, where, after a while, Mamselle sends me to him the first, as if to compose him and soften his grief. Then, strolling about, she joins us again, and we spend the rest of the day more pleasantly. If some other day he sees his daughter more after his mind, and if, trusting to her discourse and to her air, which she composes with so much effort, he overlooks her sorrow and hopes on little foundation, as he is inclined to do now to the very reverse of formerly, then he keeps his composure worse than ever, reddening with delight, and as awkward at showing as at concealing his fatherly joy. But his eyes caress in default of his hand, and, not knowing what better to do, it is to me that he addresses his gratitude, as if to make it shine before his daughter without importuning her. In these days, the evening is smiling to him as well outside as in the house, and he takes a sleep on the sofa, whilst Mademoiselle Louise, retiring to her chamber, seats herself, broken down under the effort which she has just made, and sits up until after midnight, agitated by all the bitterness that has accumulated during these hours, the restraint of which becomes heavier every day to her. Weakness then takes the place of repose, until her sorrow returns in all its strength, and, mingled with it, the grief of not being able to give her father some few hours of happiness, without serving up to him these fruits of falsehood. I urge her to retire to bed, which she never does without repugnance, after having knelt down and said her prayers, which is

her only moment of real calm. When in bed, she remains awake for a long time, although endeavouring to stifle her sighs, in order that, thinking her asleep, I may go to sleep also. But I no longer trust to these signs, since, having risen and lighted a candle two or three times to satisfy myself that she was sleeping, I found her with her forehead burning, her pillow wet with tears, and her bed tossed and disordered with fever and sleeplessness. Then, when she does fall asleep, very frequently words escape from her lips which show the sadness, as well as the angelic goodness of her soul even in the bosom of sleep.

Such, my worthy master, are both her days and nights, of which I give you a description, not knowing how better to instruct you; although it is not your servant's place to ask you to lay any weight on what she thinks respecting her dear mistress. As for myself, my mind is made up. Although very often, and whenever I am near her, I am ready to deceive myself and to have strong hope, not being able to conceive that so charming a creature can run any danger on the part of Heaven, nevertheless, I think her dangerously attacked, and as if bleeding from a wound which constraint only renders deeper, and which time does not heal. I have, moreover, remembrance of the past times, which M. Reybaz has apparently forgotten, when the least shock, in stopping her growth, or in troubling her peace, has twice or thrice brought her to the brink of the tomb. This alarm haunts me always; for, although I have not carried this young lady in my bosom, and nourished her with my milk, I feel just the same for her as if I had; without counting her poor father, who, for being blinded, prepares for himself perhaps an affliction so great, that it will break him like a reed of the marshes, strong and robust as he is!

He is himself greatly changed, Monsieur Prevere. From being active and careful about country labours, he has become careless in body, turbulent within, and always tossed between the hope of better times and the fear of approaching sorrows; resting in this state for whole hours, or walking about, not at random, but as if fearing to go far away; rude to accost, except when they are people who can restrain his daughter or amuse her, and no longer

taking any more heed as to the precentor who replaces him, or of his crops which are cutting at the parsonage, than of the grey rocks which we see from this on the slope of the mountain. Like his daughter, he has his solitary sufferings of which no one is witness, but whose symptoms can be seen, or whose effects betray themselves; and it is my opinion, that this sleep which formerly visited him every day, towards noontide, is changed into heavy anguish and sharp suffering. His sober and discreet nature refuses him tears much more than it spares him sorrows, which not being able to bend, shake him. Whether it is this indolent life in which his limbs and features have grown languid, or these torments in which he struggles without aid or succour, his face is much thinner, and his forehead is, as it were, covered with wrinkles, which being less burned with the sun, are plainer to be seen. As for me, up to our departure from the parsonage, and even on the car which brought us here, I thought he was harsh to M. Charles, to his daughter, and to himself; but having seen him so near going back from his resolution, and with much less motive than now, I cannot fancy what are the chains which hold him. He has a friend who is inclined against M. Charles, but Monsieur le Pasteur knows better than any one else, that M. Reybaz, a secret and wilful man, is not one to allow himself to be led, besides that his affection for his daughter would prevail over all other to govern him. Is it then that this affection blinds him in order to destroy him? May the Almighty enlighten him then, and make him to see where the path leads which we are treading! It is what I ask from Him in every prayer.

I thank Monsieur le Pasteur most kindly for the kind message which he sent me by the hands of this dear young lady, and for the care which he has taken to hand over my hemp to the Widow Crozat. I always said that this poor woman would return to God and repent of her errors, which were too wild to last long. It was M. Reybaz's idea also. If Monsieur le Pasteur would be kind enough to pay her the amount of what I owe her, I would be most grateful; and, at the same time, give her my regards, and tell her of the pleasure I felt in hearing of

her return to the good God, except in whom there is nothing but darkness and anguish without term or respite.

Receive, my worthy master, the respects of your most affectionate servant,

MARTHA COMBAZ.

LXXIII.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

Morneer.

SINCE your last, for which I scolded you at the time, a month and more has passed without bringing any visible change for better or worse; if indeed I am any judge! For, living with my daughter at all hours, habit may deceive me, and signs which take place insensibly from day to day may escape my notice, which they would not do a person's who had not seen her during this month. What makes me say this and inclines me to believe that I no longer see rightly, letting myself be seduced by wavering and lying signs, is that Louise, although being certainly the same, or very nearly, to-day as she was yesterday, nevertheless looks quite different to me: in such sort, that one day I look at her with alarm, another with hope, or I ought rather to say, with light-heartedness. On these latter your letter comes into my mind, and I turn over in my thoughts those ideas which you insinuate respecting M. De la Cour, coming at last to look on this young man as a plank of safety for the future, if God should grant that my Louise, on recovering her health, were again to harbour the idea of a support for the time when I shall be no more. I informed you, at the time, of what passed between me and this notable, the upshot of which was that I dismissed him; since then I have had no communication of any kind either with him or his, nor do I wish to have any, partly because there cannot be a question about anything till years have cured and changed the present state of things, partly because it belongs to the man alone to make advances, and above all to a notable when coming among country-folk. However it came to my ears from the

parsonage, where the parents of Jaques, informed by him, have prated more about the matter than was fitting, that after this duel the young man did not hold himself as cured of his attachment, and that it is on account of the mortification which he still feels at it, that his mother has set off to comfort him. On hearing this tale, I recollected that you had an opportunity of speaking to the lady when she passed through Geneva, about a house which you wished to buy of her (a small house in the Rue du Temple). If, then or since, you have heard anything more about this young man, and about the mind in which his mother is at present, she being always contrary to this marriage, take care to inform me of it upon occasion, without, however, there being anything pressing in the matter.

To return to my Lotise, it is on her account that I write to you to-day, that you may assist me with counsel; finding that the hour is come, when, at the price of going against my inclination, which is contrary to medicine, I ought no longer to delay taking the advice of a physician. I should have sent for the one who attends the parsonage, and who sent us to this place; but, having reflected upon it, I have decided in favour of one from town, by reason that, being a different one, there is a chance that he may at the same time be a better; by reason too that I believe one from town, besides having seen more diseases, has gentler ideas as well as a lighter hand; while ours, accustomed to strong and hardy villagers, might not know how to temper his medicine in regard of a delicate person. And in fact, what restores a robust carries off a weakly patient, whom age and disease have already slowly undermined.

I want counsel more than drugs, and sense more than learning. Drugs, Champin, arouse my distrust, unless when, having composed them myself, I have knowledge of the end as well as the means; and besides I use such that if they do no good, which is uncertain in every case, they cannot at least do any harm and disturb that habit of body which, if it is not always health and well-being, is at least, a balance, made by one more skilful than we are. I figure to myself this balance as resembling that of a man

who, though dangerously seated and ill at ease on the brink of an abyss, nevertheless does not fall so long as he does not stir, and whom a presumptuous, in trying to fix him firmly, might dash headlong. If I was that man (and I am so when disease lays hold of me), I would say to him who was most confident that he could save me, "Go your ways!" But if I perceived in the crowd one who was timid and at the same time compassionate, I would allow him to approach me, to see how I was situated, by what I was supported, and when he had ascertained that he could not endanger the clod that propped me up, or the stone against which I leaned, I would then allow him to make gently some uncertain but not dangerous attempt. It is to this that I reduce the office of medicine. But these unknown drugs, which they fancy they have a right to give a passage through our bodies, I mistrust them, knowing them active, and that for this reason if they do not cure, they make worse. Handled by an ignorant, they would be a poison, handled by a skilful, what are they? This skilful has not reached the halfway of what he ought to know. He knows his drug and its power; he knows what enters into it—three or four ingredients, each of which, mixed with the others, changes its nature; and when I say that he knows what enters into it, I should express myself more justly if I were to say that he knows what he wishes should enter into it; for he gives you nothing but a bit of paper covered with scrawls, decipherable by the chemist alone or by his apprentice, who boldly makes up the mixture with ingredients for which he himself is obliged to depend on those who sell them to him, or who prepare them for him! Fine causes for security these! And when from that mute scrawl has issued a draught made by weight and scale, and by persons who know neither the reason nor the object, can you, without trembling, give it to your patient? As for me, I cannot. So I like the remedies of tradition, such as pass from mouth to mouth, tried by everybody, and composed of matters whose use is familiar and which are known to all. In default of them, I prefer the advice of the doctor who keeps a shop himself, as it was at the parsonage before Nicolet added drugs to his grocery; or

else that of the apothecary, as you see some who, doctors in secret, take you into their back-shop, and on learning your complaint, pour out of a bottle the stuff that is suitable for it. There, at least, I have but one hand, but one head, but one will, acting in concert, in face of the causes, and in sight of the term; and not a clear-sighted person who is waited on by the blind, and me between them, who may meet my death through their agreeing equally well as through their disagreeing without even knowing whom to find fault with.

And yet, Champin, this is the moiety of knowledge which I do not deny them. But the other, the science of the human body, a tissue of so many veins, nerves, bones and fibres crossing each other, so many liquids balancing, mingling, separating, and doing their work out of sight, in that inward night of the body—how can I be sure that they have it in suitable and certain measure? And even were I to grant it them, still all this is nothing if they have not besides the knowledge of the human body of each man, at each period of his life, at each moment of his illness. And can they say that they have this, or that they can ever have it? They do not even seek it. On leaving the schools, they treat me in virtue of their diploma, not in virtue of their knowing me better than they did yesterday before they had it; and they are in a greater haste to administer their medicine than to learn what ails my body for which they prescribe. Thus they go on prescribing without knowing, instead of trying to know before they prescribe. Some, at most, rendered more reflecting by experience, become fearful; and the progress which they have made is to doubt that learning which made them so bold, to abstain from employing it, knowing it so lame, and so near to being hurtful. These drug you little, and examine much: they are sober in action, timid in counsel, leaving by little and little those heights of medicine to descend again to that science of practice, which is true only because it knows itself limited, and which, contrariwise to what is usually done, one ought to prize more for what it avows itself ignorant of than for what it professes to know. It is one of these physicians that I beg you to find for me, apprizing you that, as I have already said, I

want counsel more than drugs, to which, besides, Louise has a stronger dislike even than I have. So, if you can choose me one who is not a prater, and who knows how to look before he pronounces, to inquire before he decides, you will oblige me the more, inasmuch as holding to this one, I shall not give you the trouble to furnish me with another.

And then, Champin, what drug to give this child which can mend her ailment? And is it with draughts that one can dissipate the sorrows of the soul? All that we can do is to assist by a prudent regimen, and by needful things, the remedies of time and of the will. As for this last, the dear child does not spare it, striving unceasingly towards a state that shall satisfy me, and, I fear, wearing herself out by it. Her face is pleasant to me to look on, and her words temper my cares; but it is because in place of tears she puts on a smile when she turns it towards me, and, in place of sighs, her lips allow none but peaceful and consolatory words to pass them, by which I am seduced for the moment, but without deriving from them any durable confidence. Weeks, months pass on, and still I see not the shaft that has wounded her drop from her side, or the wound close which it made. Her frail life is all spent in suffering and concealing; and here am I reduced, for want of the true remedy, from which I am henceforth cut off, to have recourse to the equivocal speech of a doctor. Ah, Champin! I pardon you for the sake of your intentions; but I fear, I have a presentiment, that, in withdrawing that veil, you have undone me! I have forebodings; and, if the heart could show itself in the light, you would discover at the very bottom of mine, beneath the storms which toss, beneath the billows which beat it, fixed terrors, weights which press heavily upon it, and which are but the still secret foreknowledge of a fatal term, towards which I am advancing, though I cannot see it, though I turn away my eyes from it!

When it is to these ideas that I incline, Champin, and when, without turning away my eyes, I seek to look into the future, and, as it were, to view my tomb, I imagine that on this side of it I see another grave! This sight distracting me, it is with great difficulty that I can hold

myself up, and nothing but the deep fear that Louise may perhaps be within hearing, can, by overpowering me, silence those groans which until now I have never known. This grave, freezing to behold, is but an image, or, to say the truth, a recollection; but why does it rise at this hour from the depths of the memory in which are buried so many things, to float on the surface of my mind? Wherefore then does this grave, when I abhor it, when my soul turns shuddering from it, appear in whatsoever direction my thoughts flee, and behind whatever screen they try to hide themselves?

When we were at the parsonage I was fond of going to take a nap on a cool green sward, shaded by shrubs and overhung by those large beech-trees which stand beside the church-porch. This spot, without culture, is all the more quiet for that; when, besides, no carts approach it but in harvest time to clear the neighbouring fields, the road being at a distance. Near at hand is the church-yard, where silence, which is the voice of the dead, is the rule for the living. Now and then, but rarely, a grave is opened for one of the parishioners who is gathered to his fathers. Last year the daughter of Piombet, the cowherd, was buried there. She was a fair creature, seized in her eighteenth year, and already betrothed only to be put under ground. Her death gave me no more concern than that of so many others that one has seen at my age; and every day, after my nap, when returning to the parsonage to set about my work, I stepped, without feeling sad to see it, upon this grave, fresh at first; then covered with that rank herbage which fattens upon our bones; and, lastly, by those flowers which grow as if to insult our misery, turning a place of mourning into a place of joy. It is this grave, Champin, so little noticed then, which besets me at this hour—distinct, steaming in the morning sun, faded at noon, with its herbage, with the dry leaves shed on it from the beeches, and, above all, with two marigolds at the west corner, nodding to each other gently in the breeze. When in like manner, I go in the heat of the day to seek a nap here in the wood, which is but a few paces off—when I sit me down, when I rise up, this grave meets my eye and lays

fast hold of my memory, till I feel a horror at the sight of a flower, at the touch of this ground on which I tread, and my whole soul is frozen with a cold sweat.

It is thus tossed about and trembling therefore, as it were, that I pass week after week, demanding of each what each until now has not brought. And yet to me little would be wealth—would be treasure! So that, at times, seeing my Louise less afflicted or merely taking part in the conversation, I immediately join once more the happiness which is to come with the happiness that is past, and this grave sinks and disappears under the more truthful flowers of joy, of a festive joy, full, fresh, recovered, when I imagined it lost for ever!

Adieu, Champin, and Heaven preserve you from these joys bought at so large a price of sorrows, only to turn out a shadow, impossible to bind and to hold fast!

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

LXXIV.

CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

Geneva.

You do well, ancient, to address yourself to me. I have seen this lady, and have heard news from different quarters—news that will rejoice you. You scold me in your preceding, in that I insinuate on the subject of her son instead of speaking to you without beating about the bush; but, old one, you forget that, in presence of your grief, one is fearful of hurting it by overtures out of season, and, besides, apropos of a spark whom at the time you disliked. Hence this covert language which, if it was little to your liking, was not a whit more to mine. Now that you ask about him, you shall hear.

But first, let me comfort you, my poor Reybaz; for your misery, and this grave, though a mere maggot of a gloomy brain, have rent my heart. If you fret your inside in this way I will not give you two years to live; and, transposing your graves, I see yours in advance of the other, by the whole length of that green old age which it is yet

left you to complete. What good will it do you to brood over prognostics, and burdens, and troubles, which you have as pat as another has good-morrow and good-evening? I no longer know you, Reybaz. Formerly you were firm as a rock, talking sense, obstinate in disbelieving, except you saw with your own eyes, and, by consequence, a man upright in deed and of good counsel, and the corner-stone of us all. And now here you are, tossing to and fro like a rolling wave, talking phantoms, clinging to bugbears, and bothering your brains about marigolds!—Rub your eyes, Reybaz, come back to the matter, and be assured that affliction, if you caress it, will get the better of you; if you wed it, is a silly wife that will poison your life by her babbling, her whims, and her extravagances, if care be not taken to keep her within proper bounds.

Not that I do not know and share yours, which is just, old boy, but only in a certain measure, and combatted besides by the fact of this danger from which Heaven has withdrawn you by my hand; for which one day, instead of reproaching, you will bless me. What is the matter then? Your poor darling is vexed, grieved; her cheeks are paler, her appetite less. Reybaz, is this a cause to dream of graves and burials? Such things happen to three-fourths of all young women, and very few travel to marriage by any other road—I mean the wise ones. I know more than ten, more than twenty, hereabout, and slim and slender, who have been obliged to mark step, their lover having given them the slip, who have lost the bloom of their cheeks, the fire of the eye, the taste for pleasure, the appetite for victuals, and who, after a given time, have picked up all these again and a husband to boot! I knew one who was sent to Mornex; Mornex did her no good: who was drenched with drugs and draughts; drugs and draughts did her no good: she fell away perceptibly, and was going fast—so the gossips said, and the doctor too. It was because her lover had been carried off into the other world by the small-pox. Her father, not knowing what to do, took her to the baths of St. Gervais, where a young clergyman, who was there drinking the sulphur, took pity on her, read to her, and pleased her so much and comforted her so well, that the marriage was

settled between them and the parents, while they were still drinking the waters. From this moment the dead one came to life again, to the credit of the baths; and the master attributed the virtue to his water, "stinking," confesses he, "but sovereign for girls in a decline." This person, so brought to life, is now a stout mamma—Madame Dervev, where this Charles was! There, Reybaz, is the world for you and the way of the world! There is no harm in wishing it better, but to fret about it, and to breed bile by the bucketful, is like grieving because the earth is round and the moon above the street-lamps.

Your Louise is more moved than others; her heart is deeper pierced? I am certain of it (more by token that you mis-understood me when you reproach me with not being respectful in regard to her); but what is that saying, if not that she requires a little more time, when, besides, you have plenty of leisure, and also means to cocker her as you please? What is that saying, even if you have here already a husband for her in case of need, and at any time that shall be opportune—in two years, in three years, in ten years: a husband at your very door; a gentleman and yet a countryman; rich, and luckily your neighbour; in such fashion that they can link themselves without anybody's meddling in it, meet without any trouble but not running away, and come together at whatever time they shall themselves desire. Come, Reybaz, cheer up!—change me this grave into a nuptial couch, these marigolds into a bridal wreath, and, instead of wasting yourself away in tortures, keep yourself up for the joys of the wedding and the festive songs!

You see I know more than you inquired about. Only I should not have said anything to you without this advance which you make, knowing you adverse to the business, and that, besides, the right moment is not arrived. And what I know about it is from first hand, having had occasion, as you say, to chat with this lady when she passed through Geneva, and having written to her since on the subject of this small house, without forgetting here and there to inquire after her son, who she had told me was so ill. Learn, Reybaz, that he was dying for love of your girl; and that when Madame De la Cour left the

parsonage, it was to join him immediately, having received tidings that, owing to grief and despair, her young man was going at double quick into the other world. She hastened to him then, and, knowing that I was your old and tried friend, in passing through the town she sounded me, just as you sound me, on which I said to her: "There is nothing to be done. As for Reybaz I would not say, for, perhaps out of affection for his daughter, he would, with a view to settle her, give up his peculiar ideas, which are contrary to your young man; but as for his daughter, she is ready, if a tongue were but lifted on the subject, to go and make a vow of celibacy rather than listen to anything so contrary to her present affection. Oh, madam!" said I to her, "you know not what a girl she is! Discreet, faithful, and educated as well in feeling as in understanding, such a heart as one cannot bespeak, and instructed by M. Prevere in learning as well as in the virtues." "I know it," she replied, weeping; "she is a person who would do honour to worthier than my son." And I saw a longing to have Louise for her daughter-in-law glisten in her eyes; for she is a good lady, and one who, though holding a higher station, and living in her own society, nevertheless knows the value of your daughter, whom besides she loves and cherishes from having known her when a child, and from having received from her, quite recently, since the duel, a visit which then touched her in the tenderest spot.

This is what passed at the time. And since then, in her letters, referring at times to the subject, she has always repeated the same thing. Still more, it is my opinion, in the present situation, whilst keeping secret what we are now speaking of, that we must hold the same discourse over again to her, only taking care not to offend her or to refuse her too roughly, and giving her to understand that, if there is nothing to be done at the present, God alone knows the future. So I shall not stir, Reybaz, till you order me; only letting you know that, as soon as the time is come, you will find through me a way ready prepared, and the only one you have to employ. You will then learn if I know how to serve you in the good as well as in the evil. The only thing I require of you in order to

succeed, if it should come to pass that it be realized, is to keep everything between you and me quite secret, that you may have, in this delicate matter, and one nevertheless that may perhaps be your salvation—no one to govern but me, who from this day forth put myself into your hand, to be guided and spurred by you alone, in that you know best what is good for your daughter, and that you will save her by my friendly and docile aid.

So then we are perfectly agreed. You will not stir, nor say a word; and as for me, I let my line drop into the water, without moving it, without drawing it up; letting the fish watch the bait, till you say, “Champin, I want me this fish.” But the moment you stir, the moment you speak, the moment you cease to trust me alone in this affair, I drop line and hook and everything, and leave you to fish in troubled water.

It remains to answer you on the article of the doctor. *Pardieu!* I knew you again, old boy, in your pleading against drugs and druggers; that is to talk like a man who has his wits clear. You have no faith, nor I either. They are Cagliostroes, as Ramus says, inventors of diseases, venders of miseries, who cannot do without patients any more than lawyers without clients. If they have none, they make them. You want one who is not a prater, I understand you: this is the case to light the lantern of Diogenes. Their art is of words, their science of phrases; how can they help being rich in words? They know nothing either about the disorder or the drug, but they name the disorder, and they scribble down the drug, and by means of this gibberish, they are as good friends with the chemist as rogues at a fair, that is the whole of their trade. The patient dies, or recovers: it is the fault of nature, never of the doctor's, or it is the honour of medicine, never of nature; and in this way the money is always well earned. Their business being thus an affair of the tongue, they become praters, inexhaustible in babble, skilful also at dispensing to each, not only the drugs of medicine but also the drugs of language. I know one who, only in this four-storey house, has a different sort of manner for each: Methodist in the second, with two old ladies, who sing hymns till they are hoarse; clergy in the first with

M. Dervev, who dislikes Methodists; coming the ninety-two with an old representative who coughs in the third, and a tuft-hunter with a first Syndic, who is enthroned in the fourth. By means of which, all swallow his pills so gilt, and to prove it, one of the old creatures has just died from them, and the survivor, fearful of doing likewise, has thrown herself into the hands of the homeopaths, who affirm, that with no more than a ten-millionth part of a grain of powder of perlimpimpin, they would have saved her sister.

And note well, Reybaz, that these two good ladies, staunch Mummies (Methodists), and standing high in the sect, never speak of the other world but with a sigh after its invisible goods, more by token, that they despise as impious all those who, finding this one very agreeable as it is, are little anxious to leave it; and then, when the doctor helps them off to their invisible possessions, here is one of them goes with sour looks, and the survivor, angry with this good doctor—true conductor of souls—grasps at the homeopaths for nothing but that they promise to keep her in this one with their powders. A proof, methinks, that these good ladies are as fond of this wicked world as of the apple of their eye, and that their affection for the other resembles that of Jean De Nivelle's dog, which,

“When one called him, ran another way.”

Mummies they are then; the name is a fitting one for these parades of sentiment—what are they but pure mummery, when neither the heart nor the conduct corresponds! How many have you seen, Reybaz, going to paradise as to a wedding, among those who are always singing its wonders? How many have you seen taking the good meat ~~from~~ under their teeth, the down bed from under their ~~heads~~, renouncing servants, equipages, the luxuries of the town and the pleasures of the country, among those great ones who sing to us so lustily about *the one thing needful*? So that I am always tempted to say to them on Sundays, when they come in a fine carriage from their country seat to their church here hard by, “Hallo, friend, if your cross fatigues you, lay it down awhile, I will gladly take it up!”

But to return to the doctors—I approve however of your consulting a sensible one, not in order to give him the rule, but to join his experience to your own. To this end I have chosen one, who is up in years, but still goes out to patients, and I have told him so much of the history of your daughter as was needful for him to know: seeing that it is critical to leave them to guess, and they might treat you for the St. Antony's fire, when all the time you had a quartan ague. He heard what I had to say, and then he added, “I must see her.” So you have only to let me know, and I will send him to you. He is a Monsieur Maigrat, Rue du Soleil Levant. As for his price, which I asked, he affected the delicate, saying that he had no price, but that which people think fit to offer. We shall see whether this is parade too; mummary, as I suspect; money being also a thing which people decry, but which they pocket.

Upon this, adieu, Reybaz, and get up your spirits, without forgetting to let your friend hear from you, in good and in ill, in life and in death.

CHAMPIN.

LXV.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO CHAMPIN.

Turin

ON my return from Florence, Monsieur Champin, I found your letter here. It destroys all my projects, and fills me with terror. What! this unfortunate the child of the wretches you tell me?—a prison!—infamy!—and your ambiguous words lead me to believe that it is you who have been the means of raising this veil. Great God! What sort of man are *you*?—with whom have I had to do?—to what depth have I descended?

But your audacity, sir, passes all limits. How! You dare to write to me that “*I told you to act, and that you have acted.*” You dare to make me thus the accomplice of an action, the very possibility of which I was ignorant of, of an odious, of a criminal action, and before the accomplishment of which I would assuredly have recoiled,

even at the risk of compromising irretrievably the happiness and even the life of my son. Retract at once these unworthy words—hasten to acknowledge in the clearest terms, and in the most peremptory manner, that if I charged you to use some exertions in favour of my son, never—never did the idea of taking from M. Charles anything which he could acquire, and still less the idea of doing any hurt to this amiable and unfortunate young man enter my thoughts, and were neither openly suggested to you nor indirectly insinuated by me. Hasten, Monsieur Champin, or you will see me instantly not only break off all communication with you, but openly disavow your services, unveil your plot, and unmask you to M. Reybaz, if you have not told him all—to M. Prevere, who is assuredly ignorant of your plans, and to all those who know me, and who are interested in Charles—nay to Charles himself!

And not only have you terrified me by your odious proceedings, but you deceive yourself greatly if you think you have served me by such shameful means. This barrier which you have raised between Charles and Louise, you have at the same time raised between her and my son. Must he not be deprived of every honourable feeling to venture to advance under such circumstances?—to take advantage of the frightful situation into which your discoveries have thrown an unfortunate wretch? And, in taking this advantage, would he not appear—would he not be—the accomplice of your manoeuvres? No! learn that with the same blow you ruined, irretrievably, M. Charles's future destiny, and extinguished that ray of hope which I had succeeded in recovering myself, and in displaying before the eyes of my son.

You recommend me discretion. I recognise in you no right to impose it upon me, *à propos* of acts which I have not authorised—which I hate and condemn, and which you have had the hardihood to confide to me, in implicating me in them, as far as in your power. In accepting in any degree whatsoever this obligation to keep your secret, I should fall into the snare which you lay for me, and I should share with you the responsibility which now remains with you, and with you alone. I consider myself,

therefore, as free to speak, and be assured I will speak. I will speak to my son himself; I will let him know all your plot, if you do not hasten to retract to me, in the most peremptory manner, your insolent and treacherous words. For, in that case, it concerns my honour that he should know what has passed, and I shall certainly not run the risk of his imputing to me, one day (were it even after my death), having taken a silent part in these criminal machinations; of his accusing his mother, and of his cursing her memory; of his charging her with having added to his misery, opprobrium and infamy. This, Monsieur Champin, is the end which your odious services have accomplished. My son's situation is rendered worse by them, and mine is rendered desperate. This hope which I had clung to, because I shared it myself, you have taken from us. Henceforth, what can I say?—what can I do? This alliance I am now ashamed of, I am now terrified at—and, in my despair, I have nothing left but to ask of Heaven that I may see my son capable of renouncing it, without sinking under the effort.

In this situation it becomes useless that you continue to exert yourself with M. Raybaz. Therefore, do nothing more with a view to our interest. I shall see, after I receive your reply, in what way I have to recompense your services. As for that which you do not fear in your last letter to boast of, as of a successful endeavour, let it never, I order you, be mentioned between us, any more than these odious documents, or those journeys which you have taken upon you to make, and which you dare to represent as done by my orders. Above all, hasten to retract your odious falsehood, and let that be the sole object of your next letter, which I await with impatience.

JULIA DE LA COUR.

LXXVI.

CHAMPIN TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

General.

UNDER the respect that I owe to Madame, her letter has made me drop from the clouds. I see that Madame is at present very uneasy about this M. Charles, about whom just now she made little concern, employing me on one errand to wile away his sweetheart from him. I see that Madame, after engaging me in all this affair, in which I had no end to serve, spurns me a little too sharply, forgetting that, if she reads my lines again, I read hers, which are not ambiguous, especially those where she says to me:—*“So let nothing stop you;”* and again, *“Act, Monsieur Champin, I am ashamed to urge you to it; but I am so unhappy!”* I see that Madame, as a reward for the harm I have done myself on her account, threatens me in no very gentle terms, forgetting too that, as for unmasking me in M. Reybaz’s eyes, I have already taken upon myself to do it; to M. Prevere—I have taken that upon myself also—since I have myself sent him the papers. There only remains M. Charles, and to him I have not thought it right to *unmask* myself, at the risk of telling him what it is lucky he is ignorant of. If Madame chooses to take that trouble, she is free to do so; but I may say to her with more justice than she said to me: *The responsibility rests with her, and will rest with her alone.*

For the rest, as for what is mine, I shall not shrink from it; and, since Madame is so impatient to see me take upon my shoulders that burden, of which I had reserved for her her share, ~~be~~ it so! I take it, and, what is more, I lift it without trouble. I will retract all that Madame pleases; I am ready to sign, not that I *disavow* her, which might offend her, but that I never knew her, that I have not acted by her desire or on her account; that if I have meddled in the affair of Mamselle Louise, it was for my amusement and by way of pastime. I will sign all this and more, if Madame will gain one hour’s sound sleep by it, and that, without claiming from her any other favour than that of not returning her letters, except the last, if she particularly desires it. But Madame will act more

prudently not to be in a passion and to keep herself quiet, without forcing a poor devil to defend himself who can render her good service, but who, if attacked rather briskly, might yet find a sword to parry, or teeth to bite withal.

It is my opinion, too, that Madame will do well not to follow up her design of telling everything to her son, though, as far as I am concerned, she is free to do so. He might take the matter to heart, and, finding himself hindered by this infamy which Madame speaks of from ever allying himself with Mamselle Louise, he might fall back into those gloomy ideas from which Madame has drawn him, and which lead straight to the other world. Let Madame, then, who is so tender of him, beware of doing anything of this sort: I give her this advice the more freely, as it is her interest which guides me here and not mine. How can the apostrophes and the catastrophes of Monsieur her son affect me? Must I then, in order to content him, have allowed Reybaz to graft his race upon a tainted stock? and because the father of this Charles happens to be a rogne, is it M. Ernest who can help that, and need he fret himself about it? I will go much farther; if Madame, instead of bringing all this storm of anger and abuse about my ears, with which her letter has stunned me, had asked me in civil terms to take the whole upon my cap, "Never stop for that!" I should have answered, "for what I have done I have done to hinder Reybaz from putting his foot in the net;" and I should be ready to do it over again, being neither a friend of Reybaz nor an ancient by race, to keep coy when it was needful to be stirring, and to nail my tongue when it was the hour to speak. And, after all, if Madame makes it such a point that I should give her this assurance that I have *unmasked* this Charles on Reybaz's account rather than on hers, well! I hereby give her this assurance, written and signed by my hand. Let her be content, then, and not come to cavil with me again about words, and still less haggle with me about a few francs' worth of papers, which are an ingot to me, a *liard* to her. Would she rather, then, that I sent the bill to Reybaz, or to M. Prevere? Or else does she mean me to feed with

my pittance those officers of justice, to fatten them upon my substance? In truth, I had rather be repaid those fifty francs, to the end that winter, which will presently be here, may find me warmly clothed, and ready to receive it in my lodge, where it is not a good fire that can keep it aloof.

If then Madame refuses to pay, upon which point I have no intention to press her, she may be certain that I shall send my memorandum to Reybaz or to the pastor; leaving them to decide between themselves and her to whom the debt belongs, and confining myself to furnishing the little documents on this subject, which will be claimed from my complaisance. I fear that they will not be very favourable to the intention which Madame manifests of saving these fifty francs; for to say the truth, M. Prevère would have dissuaded me from acting; M. Reybaz did not urge me to it; the letters of Madame alone remain in court, sufficiently explained by the situation in which she was, and moreover, without enigma for any one who can read: "*Let nothing stop you!..... Act, Monsieur Champin: I am ashamed to urge you to it, but I am so unhappy!*" What, then, was Madame ashamed of? Was it of having recourse to the assistance of a porter?

All this will let Madame understand that I did not go to work at random, like a ninny, and that neither the how nor the why of things passes far from my nose. I am most willing to pull the chestnuts out of the fire that Madame may munch them; but I ask her at least not to make me burn my paw more than I can help. She will see, in like manner, that she has no other wise course to take but to keep quiet, to continue, without spoiling anything, a work which is going on so well, and to depend on me in everything, without stirring any more than hitherto, and without putting herself in rebellion, as in her last; to the end that she may not have to learn to her cost that I am not one of those who quietly suffer their beards to be set on fire, without him who holds the candle getting something more burned than his fingers, and crying very soon for mercy.

And then, let Madame listen, and thank the good God that she has not yet done any mischief nor breathed a

word to her son about things, which now that quails are dropping down upon him ready roasted, would keep his teeth closed, and his lips sewed up. Let her listen, and let her anger cease and her anxieties be dispelled. Let her learn that to-day, as I had foreseen, and as I had laboured to bring about, it is Reybaz himself who approaches, and throws kind glances at her son, regarding him as a plank of safety for his daughter and a port after these storms! Let her learn that while she was in the fair way of ruining everything, as well by divulging to her son as by rebelling against me, Reybaz, coming of himself to be caught in the nets which I had spread, wrote to me in the same terms and from the same motives that urged Madame to write to me at first: requesting me to explore the ground, for the future, be it understood, and to hold him informed as to what is said about the young man, and as to his mother's ideas, since he thinks her even now unfavourably disposed towards this marriage. And if Madame doubts these so happy, and for her, so unhopedor tidings, I am ready to send her immediately the letters in which Reybaz comes half way to meet that which she desires most in the world.

Such was the state of things, when the letter came, in which Madame speaks to me like a Turk to a Moor, treating me in such a fashion, that if I was not devoted to her interests, I should not have been at a loss either for a motive or for the means of doing her more harm and injury than I defy her to do to me. But I heeded not her scolding dictated by trouble, by scruples, and by her situation, which I feel pity for; wishing to help her out of it in spite of herself, in order to receive a reward and at the same time to do justice. In like manner, she is not to take ill what I have said above, which I tell her to enlighten her, not to fail in the respect which I am quite full of towards her. Let her not stir in the business, then, unless to converse with her son, and to give me news of him; and for the rest, let her trust to me, taking care, above all, not to put a hand to it herself, nor so much as the tip of her little finger. In continuing the work of which all the difficult part is done, and in which it only remains to pull the thread gently, I shall instruct Reybaz of what

he ought to know, and shall watch for the moment when, all being ready, Madame will have nothing to do but to show herself in order that the business may be clinched. Then two worthy parents will be relieved from affliction, two worthy children will be given to each other, and of all this storm nothing will be left but a recollection well fitting to heighten still more the serenity of their days. Let Madame be easy, then, and rely upon the devoted services of her respectful servant,

CHAMPIN.

LXXVII.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO CHAMPIN.

Turin.

THOUGH your letter, Monsieur Champin, is not that which I looked for from you, and though I am far from subscribing to the insinuations and to the interpretations which it contains, I do not the less think it useless and out of place to continue any contest on the same subject. We shall retain a good understanding, therefore, and in this sense, that without looking back at the past, we shall speak of the future alone, and that on this point we shall comprehend each other better.

I am most anxious to do everything to raise my son's hopes. The good news which you transmit me enables me to do so, even were I unprovided with any other source for supporting and sustaining him; but his situation is such, he requires to be roused from so deep dejection, that M. Reybaz's advances themselves have terrified me, as being premature. Time must first elapse; M. Charles's lot must be defined—must be ameliorated; and, lastly, Mademoiselle Louise's sentiments must change, before anything can be attempted. Otherwise, our efforts would turn against ourselves. Such is my decided opinion, which I transmit to you in order that you may conform to it in not attempting to prosecute this—nor, in any case, without my previous approbation, any sort of proceeding. I do not return, as you see, upon the past; but I depend on you, as you see also that nothing in

future may be done but with my good pleasure. If, therefore, you enjoin me not to stir in the matter, I enjoin you in like manner; and I add, that it is by this I shall ascertain if the devotion which you profess towards me is sincere and without concealed intent—if I can continue to rely upon you, or if I have been dealing with a man whose morality is doubtful and whose assistance is dangerous.

Let not this language astonish Monsieur Champin; it is your two last letters which have thrown me into a state of doubt respecting you. Let it not irritate you either, for I offer you a very simple and very easy way of proving to me your devotion when I ask of you no other service than that of keeping yourself entirely out of sight, and doing nothing without my participation. Clearly understand, however, that my positive intention is to recompense you only after you have given those other proofs of your sincerity which I demand, and that if you should happen to fail in my present injunctions in any way whatsoever, you will have to remain without any consideration for your services. For, in that case, by paying for them, I should give the sole proof that I had countenanced them. Since, therefore, you are not a fool, as I think—use your intelligence to comprehend me, and employ your skillfulness in doing nothing. It is the only part which you have to perform.

JULIA DE LA COUR.

LXXVIII.

MADAME DE LA COUR TO REYBAZ.

Turin.

THESE lines, my dear Monsieur Reybaz, will surprise you, but I venture to hope that they will be read by you, and that after having comprehended the feeling which dictates them, you will give a favourable reception to the wish expressed in them. Alas! you have your sorrows, my dear neighbour—I have mine. We are both tried in that which is dearest to us in the world; may this common affliction draw us together, may it make us each a support to the other, a consolation, and if possible, a remedy!

My heart is torn with anguish, I shed tears while I write to you. Since I left the parsonage, I have never known a happy day. Neither time, nor reason, nor obstacles have changed my Ernest's heart, Monsieur Reybaz, easily enamoured of the charms of your angelic daughter, and of that virtue, so rarely met, but whose empire once felt is irresistible. He has not ceased, for a single day, to rivet on her his thoughts, even when he cannot foresee any favourable chance for the accomplishment of his wishes. After having attempted a fruitless struggle against this ardent passion, he had fallen into a gloomy state of dejection, the symptoms of which he concealed from me, when Jacques wrote me what were his days, his nights, his transports, and I flew to his side. It was at this moment I learned that you had withdrawn from Charles Mademoiselle Louise's hand. In consternation on seeing the situation of my son, I could not prevent myself from displaying before his eyes a ray of hope which, for a long time, he refused to receive, but which at present he does not regard with the same absolute incredulity.

Such has been my situation, Monsieur Reybaz, such is it still. A sorrowing mother, I endeavour to bring back my child to life, in speaking to him of yours. But, behold, in proportion as I succeed in restoring him to some courage, terror seizes upon me on the other hand, and I ask myself if this hope which I display before his eyes is not a deceptive meteor—if this sole resource which I now trust in is not destined to be torn from me. It is this terror which urges me to write to you, my very dear neighbour, I approach you all trembling with anxiety and fear, I throw myself at your feet, as before one whose sole word can restore me to life or plunge me in an abyss of torment. Ah! Monsieur Reybaz, reflect that you are a father; and, at least, let not this word proceed from your lips if it is to be fatal to me.

Moreover, I do not hasten to propose impossible requests, senseless pretensions; I know, my very dear neighbour, what your situation is, and what is Louise's. I know that this dear child, her heart broken by suffering and bleeding with regret, could not hear Ernest's name pro-

nounced at present, or indeed any other but Charles's, without affright and disgust. I am aware also that you would never consent to dispose of the future happiness or the hand of your daughter, at the risk of thwarting her wishes, or of doing violence to her feelings. Therefore, I do not propose taking any step the importunity of which, in the present circumstances, would be justly odious to you. My request is a more humble one, and if I attach to it all the urgency of my desire, it is that the little which I ask—which I implore from you, is all for me—is perhaps the salvation of my child. Tell me, Monsieur Reybaz, that you, the father of Louise, will not, as far as you are personally concerned, repulse beforehand the idea of an union which the lapse of time may render possible, and in which, by our united concurrence we may both find a plank of safety. It is all that I ask from you, and if it is repugnant to you to unite at present with me in this common exertion, then I ask of you still less—namely, not to destroy by a formal decision, by a refusal without appeal, the sole resource which remains to me to sustain the courage of my child; to permit me, although you have refused him once your daughter's hand, to look upon him as worthy still to obtain that hand on the same footing as any other man, if the obstacles which must for a long time to come oppose themselves to your daughter making choice of a husband be ever removed. This is my humble prayer; beyond that I ask nothing—beyond that, I dare not even cast a look—beyond that, all that I can do is, to address to God a constant and fervent prayer that he will disregard neither you nor myself, but rather that compassionating our sufferings, he will save us one by the other.

I know you, my dear neighbour, and I respect you. Therefore, I shall take good care not to speak to you of the position or of the wealth of my Ernest. These things, which the world rates above their true value, are without *prestige* for your wise and well-regulated mind. But shall I say nothing to you of such entire changes as have taken place within him since for the first time he has found himself under the dominion of your angelic daughter? Ah! Monsieur Reybaz, you who have seen him thoughtless and

dissipated, why cannot you know him since this feeling has purified his heart, and given to his mind a turn at once grave and noble? Why cannot you recognise as I do, and recognise a thousand times over, what are the qualities which he loves in Louise, and how it is at the rays of her prudence, her dignity, her virtue, that the fire which consumes him has been kindled, and not by her features, though of so dazzling a beauty, so attractive with comeliness and grace? Why cannot you hear, as I do day and night, the dreams of an ambition at once humble and puissant, and which have for their sole object a wish to render happy an adored creature, and the glory of rising by virtue to the height of her celestial goodness? No, Monsieur Reybaz; Ernest is no longer the man whom you have known. I repeat it to you, and I conjure you never to forget it. The last fumes of his youthful folly were dissipated in that fatal duel, just as the deepest impressions of his attachment were fixed irrevocably in his heart when a few days afterwards, having met your Louise in the avenue of the chateau, he received from her a welcome of sweetness and of pardon, and left the parsonage transported with love and with despair.

Such is the situation of my Ernest, Monsieur Reybaz; and if this faithful picture which I present to you of the passion which your daughter has inspired, has in it nothing which can touch you, may I not, at least, hope that you will find in the consideration of Louise's future happiness some motive for treating my proposals with favour? You are beginning to approach the confines of old age, my dear Monsieur Reybaz, and whilst the course of nature calls you onward to the tomb, you cannot surely think without affright on the idea of your dearly loved daughter surviving you in poverty and solitude. Well, Monsieur Reybaz, after this first shipwreck of her affections, and now that she is for ever separated from the young man on whom her choice was fixed, towards what haven will you steer where she can find the shelter which is so necessary for her? Ought you not, if you do not direct it towards that which is nearest—towards that in which I would receive her as my daughter and as my good angel—at

least not to close beforehand the entrance of any; and to permit her, after so many storms, to find repose and shelter—perhaps happiness—under our common wing, and after us in my Ernest's love? Oh! if it were fated that Providence should conduct us to that end, through so many moments of anguish, and after so much suffering, how light would these evils one day seem!—what joy would spring up in my heart!—what peace would descend on my tomb and on yours!

And besides, can you deceive yourself respecting the many conditions which are necessary to your daughter's happiness, and which render so difficult for her the choice of a husband? How many conditions to fulfil, how many precautions to take? How many demands arise from her peculiar and almost exceptional situation, to avoid wounding that delicacy of feeling and of taste which she owes to the instructions of M. Prevere? to avoid bringing her to a distance from a retreat in which she has always lived and for which she was born? to avoid taking her from the midst of beings whom she cherishes, whose support and guide she is, from those victims of poverty over whom she reigns by the right of her beneficent deeds? How many qualifications to seek for in the same man, many of which, you cannot deny, are met with in my Ernest? Lay aside, therefore, I conjure you, those prejudices which, until now, you may have cherished against him, and let the very tender affection which you bear towards your child speak to you in favour of mine; or rather, my dear neighbour, let us unite and take in unison the helm of these two destinies, and from the midst of the tempest let us endeavour to steer towards happier shores, where our united efforts may be so powerful. Let us not commit our dearest interests to the blind and harsh caprice of chance.

I have opened my soul to you, Monsieur Reybaz, you may read it as I do myself. The respect and friendship I bear to you is above all evasion, all subterfuge; grief and anguish leave me neither the leisure nor the wish to prepare my ideas. I have still much more which I could say to you, many motives to urge upon you; but what the prayer of a sorrowing mother or the language

of your own reason could not accomplish in your heart, my words would be powerless to effect. If my letter find you favourable to my wishes, hasten to inform me of it; if it find you insensible to my words and adverse to my purposes, do not reply hastily, suspend your decision until you have had time to reflect, or rather keep silence, leave me to struggle in torment, and do not deprive me of the last and miserable resource of luring on my son in deceiving myself.

Your most sincere friend,

JULIA DE LA COUR.

LXXIX.

REYBAZ TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Mornev.

You shall not have long to wait for my answer, madam, and though uncertain equally as to the future—the ways of God—may it bring you some comfort! I know what are the pangs of a wounded heart, and that in every position a mother is a mother; wherefore I have compassion for you, as if you were of my own condition, though you are not, and though I do not like your son.

You perceive from this language that you will not surpass me in frankness: but, for the rest, let it not alarm you. If I have not changed, things have changed; and, in the danger which I am in, I would, in order to get out of it, part cheaply with my grudge as well as my affections. I will tell you more: this idea which you have of marrying our children, I have had as well as you, and for the same reason, namely, to seek in it a provision for my daughter and an end to all this. May the good God grant only that my daughter does not refuse, and you may be certain it is not from Reybaz that any hindrance will come. Happy they who can choose their son-in-law! The good God has only granted to me to have put aside one, and too much unhappiness followed for me to be inclined to begin again.

Still, my dear madam, let not these words mislead you;

and if you make use of them to renew in your son a courage which I think he would do better to derive from himself, having strength and the sex in his favour; let it be at your own peril and risk. You ask me if, the case happening, I should be adverse to you, and I give you the assurance that I should not. But will the case happen, and can it happen? Would to God!—and doubt not the vehemence of my wish—would to God! for if it did occur, I should have saved my child, my Louise, the offspring of my Theresa. And after having had to fear for the breath of her life, I should then only thrill with joy in thinking that, whatever might happen, my Louise will not be taken from me, that she will not go before me, withered in her bloom, to that sepulchre thirsting after young flesh and tender age. Would to God!—and, once more I repeat it—would to God!

Poor madam! you say right when you say that, if you have your sorrows, I have also mine; you say right, too, when you assert that the trial is approaching. I feel it but too manifestly, when I see Madame De la Cour, rich, a notable, the first in our country for a great distance around, at the feet of Keybaz the precentor, and Keybaz the precentor neither proud, nor ashamed, nor surprised, to see her there. Nevertheless, I like to see the distances that separate the great from the small, and to see none overtop them; but I feel now that if men are ranged one above the other by the things proceeding from the world, they are upon a level plain respecting the things which come from on high, which have their source and their issue above; by the affections and by the duties, or, if you will, by the heart, which contains the one and has the keeping of the other. I feel that if God strikes one who is rich and another who is less rich, in their goods, the distance which separated them remains; but, if he strikes each in their child, it is done away with; and immediately are laid bare those cords of affection twined at the beginning from one heart to another by the hand of the Creator, and still subsisting under the clothes which cover us, whether rags or embroidery. I feel that all men are brothers in Adam, unequal in fortune and in abundance, but equal by blood, bound to love one another as

members of the same family, and never failing to do so when misfortune approaches; although they fail without ceasing when God blesses and loads them with favours. I feel that in this our nature is halting, for it is a blemish not to be able to practise love except under the lash of calamity, instead of tasting it in the sunshine of prosperity. Lastly, I feel the necessity of the precept, *Love one another*; and I no longer see in that strange and harsh word, *Whom God loveth he chasteneth*, anything but a sign of the tenderness of the Creator towards the children of men! Therefore is it, that affliction, which is salutary for the soul, should be at the same time more bitter and loathsome than the most nauseous of those draughts which contribute to the health of the body.

In seeing you at my knees, then, my poor lady, I am not proud, but am rather grieved. I would fain soothe your affliction, were it only that I might be found worthy of having my own soothed: but how can I? You see that I doubt already whether I shall preserve my child; but supposing that this happiness should be granted me, how shall I incline her, unless I bend her by force, to consent to marry—she who had already given her heart, much more than she conceived she had given her person, and whom an innate modesty secretly impels to remain a virgin before God? How shall I induce her to forget Charles, in order to give herself to M. Ernest, whom she esteems little, whom she never liked, and whom at the bottom of her heart she reproaches for having brought misfortune upon Charles? What can I say to you? God grant it! Nothing more! I deny not the force of your reasons. I seek to support this young vine on some sucker that will prop it, after that the old scathed oak has perished: I would see in you, if need were, the mother of my Louise, that Theresa, whom she never knew, and in your son the supporter that she needs, and for the reasons which you mention. But what can I do? And when you talk about securing our concurrence, do you not see that you ask a thing which is impossible? The concurrence of my earnest desire you have, of my prayers too, but of my actions that cannot be; and this grieves me as much for your sake as for my own, my dear and pitied madam.

This is what I had to answer. Reckon upon it, that my wishes would be ready to meet yours; reckon upon it, that neither grudge nor prejudice will be listened to by me; rely upon it, moreover, that I feel compassion for you, and that I am certain you pity my calamity. But reckon upon nothing further, and beyond that, as you say yourself, pray to God, as does on his side, your most respectful

REYBAZ.

LXXX.

MADAME DE LA COTE TO CHAMPIN.

Tur

THANK Heaven I can do without your services, Monsieur Champin; I am now in direct communication with M. Reybaz. Scarcely freed from your manœuvres, my first impulse is to express to you the joy which I experience at it, to brave your insolent threats, and to testify all the contempt with which you inspire me.

When my son's situation induced me to have recourse to your services, I believed you the worthy friend of M. Reybaz. I was soon undeceived when I saw you yourself, beforehand, put a price on these services. Nevertheless, although I looked on you from that moment as wanting all elevation of soul, I had not yet learned to see in you one of those men whose services are poisonous and venomous. But that which I did not know, you took upon yourself to inform me, in that letter full of artifice, in which, while allowing me to perceive the malice and wickedness of your secret attempt, you endeavour to take me in the snare of your treacherous insinuations, to lay on my shoulders all the means on which you reckoned in terrifying, but in which you only succeeded by making me perceive the necessity of no longer employing, and no longer having to fear you. You are ill-natured and perverse, Monsieur Champin, you are hypocritical and treacherous. You merit the contempt of honest minds, and this contempt will reach you, believe me, sooner or later, and without my giving a helping hand which I could

so well do. You have no affection for your friend; and since this upright and honest man esteems, or even since he still speaks to you, you must have deceived him as you deceived me. Whilst boasting to me that you were labouring for his welfare, you evidently thought of nothing but earning your wages, and at the same time, gratifying some base grudge against the unfortunate young man; and whilst boasting to M. Reybaz of having saved him from dishonour, you assuredly took good care not to tell him that you were beforehand assured from me of a recompense for the criminal service which you reckoned upon rendering him, without my knowledge, in revealing to him Charles's birth. But that is a thing which he may know some day, if it ever becomes necessary to make him compare with each other, the letters which you have written to him and those addressed to me. As for mine, which remain in your hands, you are at liberty to produce them, and you will, perhaps, see me one day challenge you to do so. For, learn, wretch, that the reputation of honest people is not in the power of a perverse one such as you; learn, that if these blows are to be feared in the darkness, they are no longer so in daylight; learn, that from honesty to crime, the distance is too great for your falsehood to overleap, and that between Madame De la Cour and you, the cause is judged before being heard.

But enough, Monsieur Champin, enough for you to learn who I am, who you are, and to warn you not to let me find you in my path again. I have only one word to add. I fear you too little, and I respect myself too much, to cheat your cupidity of the wages which it covets, and which I allowed it to hope for when I knew neither your deceit nor your wickedness. You will find enclosed a note for a hundred louis, of which I make you a gratuitous gift; but after this, Monsieur Champin, let me never hear your name mentioned—let me never see you, in any way, mixing yourself up with whatever concerns me or my son, or else I will unmask you that very instant to M. Reybaz whom you have deceived, to M. Rebaz whom you have sported with, and to M. Charles whom you have destroyed. Return, I advise you, return into the darkness, in it to conceal from every eye your venom, like

those reptiles, which, certain of being crushed by the first passer who should see them gliding through the grass, bury themselves in the slime, and grovel in the night.

JULIA DE LA COUR.

LXXXI.

CHAMPIN TO MADAME DE LA COUR.

Geneva.

MADAME'S letter has truly pained me, so well do I see by it that Madame is mistaken in regard to me, and takes me for what I am not. Doubtless, her servant is a poor man, more desirous to oblige than prudent in action; and who has more need to earn money than to throw it or his time away for the service of others; but that is all. If Madame will be pleased to reflect, after her anger, which proceeds from her affliction, has passed off, she will agree that her severity is very harsh, and that the terms she uses cannot be fitting towards an old man, esteemed and employed by the reverend pastor Dervev, an old friend of Keybaz, having domicile and children, and having wronged no one, that he knows of, out of a son, although, in his condition, where one has the fingering of money, suspicion is quick, in case of short-coming.

I say this to Madame, much more to show her what value I set upon her esteem, than to dispute with her at a moment when she has no need to be crossed by contradiction. It is certain that, if her servant had foreseen her affliction, and better comprehended what she required, and how far she wished him to act, he would have spared her much uneasiness, and himself much trouble; that, among others, of being mal-treated by a respectable lady, when he thought he was acting for the best. So, though I shall stir no further, according to Madame's desire, because she is at present in understanding with Keybaz himself, to which event I certainly contributed my quota, she may be certain that, if it suited her further to employ her servant, he would be but a thread in her hands, immovable unless that she shook it, and which might be stretched

ten times before it would get entangled. He should be very glad if Madame would furnish him with the occasion, merely to have an opportunity of showing her that if, for his daily bread, he accepted payment which he no longer looks for, and which he should not have had the assurance to claim, he can also work for nothing, and serve respectable people, merely for the honour of being useful to them. Besides, Madame is not yet at the end, and so it only depends on her good pleasure, whether I shall give her proof that she has been mistaken in regard to an honest man, who commends himself to her goodness, well knowing that he could not stand against a powerful enemy, who would ~~can~~ do him a mischief.

Since it appears that Madame is in communication by letters with the parsonage, and perhaps with M. Prevère himself, I would beg only one favour of her, which would be agreeable to me, at the same time that Madame will see in it a proof that, full of confidence in her, I am not afraid of putting into her hands the means of injuring me, in case she should hereafter have to complain of me, from which may God for ever preserve me! This favour is that Madame would not let this worthy pastor know that she had learned anything *through me* about the parents of M. Charles, seeing that he might be angry with me for having wagged my tongue about it, though only in private and to Madame alone, who is not wishful to injure the young man. But, that M. Prevère may have no suspicions about the matter, the safest way will be for Madame to say nothing to Reybaz about what I have told her, on this same subject, in those letters which she has received from me, and in exchange for which I shall be ready to give up hers. In truth, this would be the best thing that could be done, as well for the security of Madame, as to close all this to the satisfaction of the parties; since words matter no more, than the wind, whereas writing remains, and when misinterpreted may cause harm both to one's self and others.

Most surely Madame has nothing to fear from me, but I am old and infirm, and who can assure her that after my decease those lines which I quoted to her in my last, when I am no longer here to explain them, may not be

interpreted against her? Who can assure her that, if she should succeed in marrying her son to Mamselle Louise, these lines, coming to the knowledge of M. Charles, thus discarded and made the victim, may not be to him a revelation, as it were, that his fate proceeds from Madame as much as from me? Who can assure her, finally, that the last letter, in which Madame, although abusing me, nevertheless sends one hundred louis for my services, might not, in some case, be turned against her, or at least come to the knowledge of M. Ernest, and give him, when he is already so sensitive on the subject, reason to think, that his mother has dabbled either little or much in the plot to which he will have been indebted for his wife? Let Madame be pleased to weigh these reasons, and recollect that I have her letters ready to be delivered to the person who shall bring me, on her part, the packet of mine.

For the rest, whatever Madame may do, she may count upon my anxiety to gratify her in everything, and in particular not to cross her in any way; also not to make or meddle in anything whatsoever that concerns herself or her son; I should not have left my file to look after her affairs, if she had not asked me to do so; this, I think, she is convinced of as well as I am. It is not right, then, that I should get into trouble for that which Madame requested me to assist her in; it is quite enough that, in return, I am treated by her in a way that even malefactors are seldom used. It is a good lesson to teach me to meddle with nothing but the petty labour by which I live, though with great difficulty; I shall, therefore, restrain myself, and, if that is what Madame calls burying myself in my den and living in the night, then rather than get crushed by a powerful enemy, her command shall be punctually fulfilled by him who has the honour to be

Her most humble and most obedient servant,

CHAMIN. •

LXXXII.

THE PRECENTOR TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

Mornee.

HERE is autumn come upon us, my very dear sir, and, being at a distance from you, and a prey to anguish, I cannot say that this summer season, beautiful as it was, appeared short to me. For some days past, the morning fog buries us till near noon; and it seems to me as if this grey veil was a garment which accorded well with the gloom of my soul. A few weeks more and the frosts will set in; even yesterday a rime glistened on the peak of the Mole, which, however, was gone before the evening. These preludes of winter have induced me to hasten the coming of a doctor from town, as well because I thought it a duty towards Louise, as because I needed an advice for the cold season.

It was on Monday that he came, and in a rain that disappointed me, as I had wished, knowing Louise's sensitiveness, to join her out of doors, as if taking a walk, and not to surprise her in the privacy of her chamber, and keep her there, bashful and uneasy, facing a man, whose profession permits looks which scrutinize the person and questions which alarm modesty. Foreseeing, therefore, that the interview could only take place under the roof, I went to meet the doctor, to say a word to him about my daughter, and to tell him how he must take care not to go against the grain with her. It was then I perceived that these town physicians have more knowledge of a discreet reserve than our country mediciners. At the very outset, this one seemed to me to comprehend that his business was to guess, rather than to annoy by questions, for, of his own accord, he said to me, "I have come, sir, to breakfast with you and your daughter; nothing more." This remark gave me pleasure, in taking a thorn from my side.

This physician is a tall man, and, to tell the truth, does not please by his look; more by token, that I would not exchange my dress for his, which was somewhat slovenly, and particularly his cravat, which had the wrong side out. At the first view, seeing him at a distance climbing

the hill by the side of the car I took him for the driver, though at the same time I thought him too well-looking and too ill-dressed for a coachman. But, as soon as he opened his mouth, his accent pleased me, and his manners prepossessed me in his favour by a sort of simple and open cordiality instead of the fine language that I expected. We mounted the hill together, and contrary to the practice of more than one physician I have seen, he contented himself with listening to me, letting me run on as much as I pleased about the child, whom he had not yet seen. And when I gave him to understand by covert words that there was a disappointment of the heart, he interrupted me, and begged me to speak out, for fear of mistake, his profession being already but too liable to error. I then related to him all our troubles; whilst he became grave in proportion as my discourse and my distress exhibited my fear. "Time," said he, "and prudence are in this case the true physicians, but, if you need a third, Monsieur Keybaz, reckon upon my devotion." Thus talking, we reached the house, when Louise, having perceived us, left the balcony, from which she had been surveying the landscape.

Though I had warned her of my wish to consult a physician, I had not acquainted her beforehand with this visit; so that I sought to draw her aside to prepare her for it; when, from the threshold, we saw her in the parlour laying out the breakfast. Immediately, without giving me time to speak, the doctor went up to her, and, having taken her familiarly by the hand like a child, cut short her anxiety, saying, "I am a physician, but as I see by your face that you have no need of my physic, I shall merely request your permission to breakfast with you." Louise's blush then died away, but her agitation changed to a sadness that moistened her eye-lashes. When the doctor afterwards followed her, without appearing to do so, and had chatted with her about one thing or another, she rallied so far as to take part, by little and little, in the conversation, but without joining heartily in it.

After breakfast she retired, and as the weather cleared up, I drew the doctor into the garden, where walking up

and down, it was now my turn to listen. Like all those who come near this child, he began to praise her, and to hold such language to me that I dreaded the pride which it might produce in me, as being a forerunner of ruin and the sepulchre; for pride goes before abasement, and death mows down the fine flowers (the better to show the vanities of the world) in preference to common weeds. Then, coming to the point, he did not conceal from me that Louise's state was dangerous, on account of her age and her constitution, which is more frail, he said, because of the soul which stirs within it and agitates it more than is natural: the body being sound and the growth good in every point. After which, and as if meaning to say more bye-and-bye, he asked to see Martha, with whom I left him. They talked together a long time, while I stood under the porch, watching lest Louise should notice these conversations. When they parted, I knew from Martha's eyes that she had been weeping.

The anguish which had been dispelled in the midst of the expectation and the bustle of this visit, now seized me again, with such force that, seeing Martha retiring with wet eyes, and the physician approaching with downcast look, I had that sweat of the final moment in which the body trembles and the soul is frozen. The physician left me a prey to it, to tell his man to harness, after which he proposed that we should walk on in advance, in order to have some conversation about Louise. With great difficulty I prevented myself from bursting into vehement sobs, regarding my child as lost, and her destiny written in the face of the physician, in the silence of the hill, in the paleness of the sky, even in the repose of this motionless beast, which the man was harnessing without saying a word. Ah, Monsieur Prevere! if ever I lose that girl, with truth may I say, that in thought, in torture, and in rending of heart, I have lost her twenty times over, before she is at last snatched from me; in such fashion that I ask myself if these are not shocks from God to tear away, to separate by degrees this young ivy plant from this shattered but knotty and deep-rooted tree!

However, I was affected more than was fitting. The words of the doctor were words of hope rather than dis-

couragement. He considers the ailment as a crisis, which, if stopped at this point, would go on decreasing before the active sap of the body, exempt from disease and overflowing with youth. Respecting what he had said to Martha he was silent; and, out of respect for my child, as also restrained by the broad daylight, and the sight of the passers-by, I neither wished nor dared to press him. "I have," said he, "given this good woman some directions, of which she will make a salutary use, unknown even to your daughter. As for drugs, they would here be of no use whatever; that is, the disorder is in the affections." And as, thereupon, I spoke to him of you, "Ah!" said he, "that is the true physician for your daughter!" As he spoke, my dear sir, so I report to you. After which he gave me to know that it would be necessary for us to pass the cold season at Mornex, as well because that this aspect, sheltered as it is from the *bise*, is milder for weakly persons, as because that a return to the parsonage would be for Louise a fresh shock, and would awaken recollections too recent not to be hurtful to her, every day and every hour of the day. I had already foreseen these necessities, so that, submitting to them without contradiction, it only remains to arrange matters at the parsonage accordingly.

It is for this purpose, my dear sir, that I now have recourse to your friendship. The matter is that I wish to be able to go down yonder to see after many things which this arrangement requires, and I should not like, during my absence, to leave Louise by herself in this solitude. I request of you then, though well knowing to whom you owe your chief care, to forsake them for these few days, and to bring profit and balm to my daughter. My opinion is, that on this condition my absence will be a relief rather than a pain to her; seeing that she restrains herself before me, and that I, on my part, unskilful to feign, cannot conceal from her those looks of sorrow, which are the signs of the unhappiness within. Your friendship is as tender as mine, and better tempered; you have the speech that comforts, the warmth that softens and penetrates; besides, in these times of alarm and tempest, to whom but you can I entrust so dear a possession, around which even at present, I live fearful and miserable?

Sure of your assent to my respectful request, I shall wait, my good sir, till, by your answer, you fix the day when you will come and take my place. It will be for a week or a little more.

I have nothing to add on the subject of the little one, since you will see her again so soon. Sometimes I frighten myself with the fear that you will find her altered; sometimes I comfort myself again with the hope that she will appear to you as suffering in mind rather than ill of body, and sad rather than agitated. The truth is, the worst of the shock is over, and if the stroke had wounded her mortally, ravages would have followed on the top of ravages, and not that slow and insensible habit, doubtful enough to leave room for hope, and to blunt the edge of terror. Let us incline, then, to those distant joys which God perhaps reserves in store for us, and let us beware of tempting his goodness by our gloomy forebodings. Will he fling back so many fervent prayers in the shape of calamities on our heads? And if, by my sins, or by that slowness to charity and love I feel within me, I have angered him, will he, to punish me for it, strike this child, who can do nothing but love, and who suffers at this day solely for having loved him whom I alone have rejected?

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

LXXXIII.

LOUISE TO M. PREVERE.

Mornez.

It is long since I ought to have replied to you, my dearly loved master; or rather, it is long since I have been able to feel or to say anything which would not be painful to those who love me. My broken heart has lost its spring, it is a prey to that selfishness of sorrow which stifles tenderness, and which freezes the most cherished affections.

To-day is the anniversary of that day, now a year since, when having directed my steps towards the oaks at Cheveron, Dourak drew from beneath a heap of withered

leaves that little volume of *Paul and Virginia*, which I found again with so much pleasure. Like to-day, the pale sun of autumn shed a softened light over the country; like to-day, the mountains seen through a silvery vapour, seemed to have moved to a distance; like to-day, the fields having yielded up their fruits and their crops, reposed in the sunshine; gladdened by this festival of declining summer, I seated myself beneath the oaks and contemplated this peaceful sight. I endeavoured to read, as I had done so often before, those pages of touching innocence which precede such harrowing scenes. I could not; my thoughts were no longer free, my heart had no longer a place but for one alone. Hope and secret joy and tenderness had at last penetrated it; and face to face, with this unknown and new happiness, the charm of the things of former times was effaced and could no longer be revived. I thought of Charles, the friend of my heart, the partner chosen by you, accepted by my father—of him whose tenderness was already dearer to me than life—of him whose intellect instructed me, whose gaiety triumphed over my sadness, whose character attracted me as much by its generous errors as by its amiable qualities. I planned in thought our future life; I fixed it in the midst of those happy plains; I fancied that family group, of whom my father was the head, of whom you were the soul, and Charles and I the hope and joy! Those sweet dreams in which I was steeped to the lips, without exhausting them, were prolonged until the sun had set behind the peak of Jura; then I rose to take my way again to the parsonage, and while Dourak sported around me, I acknowledged before God and with heartfelt gratitude, that the anxiety, the alarms, and the deep uneasiness to which I am subject, are but passing clouds; that the soul has its serene days, that calmness belongs also to the world, and that happiness entire, without blemish, without concealed canker-worm, has its dwelling-place also on earth.

Fleeting visions! These were pages of intoxicating happiness; after them were to follow pages of bitter sorrow. Let me not insist upon this parallel which rends your heart, my dear master, as it does my own; let me not turn, one by one, the leaves of this book, to see what

is written on the last; let me rather hope—let me rather seek your friendly hand to press it, and to support myself by its aid—let me rather seek your smile to cheer and warm me, or else let me rather implore your threats and anger, if already unworthy of your lessons or too much exhausted by my struggles, you judged that I require those powerful but sad stays to my soul and my crushed heart.

I see, and this is the very dregs of my cup, that I must also put a constraint on myself before you, my very dear master, and that I must repress this boiling flood of regret, of suffering, of gloomy affright. If I should give it vent, I should no longer be master of it, and your boundless indulgence would be put to the test, and your tenderness for me ashamed, perhaps of itself. May such an event not take place; may I soothe my suffering beneath your wing without wounding it; and may I warm myself in its shelter without sullyng its whiteness! May I, henceforth a burthen to others and no longer useful to the suffering and afflicted, exercise at least some of the virtues of misfortune, and if I cannot attain to resignation, let me at least display some courage. God does not forsake his children. I am at the crisis of a struggle; after it is over, doubtless, he will grant me less unhappy days, or else he will fortify my soul, he will heal my wounds, and he will hold out his hand to support my steps towards the final struggle.

In the mean time, my dearly loved master, you will be to the end the depository of my most secret thoughts, and, if it be the will of God, of my wishes and intentions. Until the end, my grief-stricken head will repose itself upon your bosom, and will breathe there those sighs which I must conceal from all others. Therefore, I unveil before you those gloomy thoughts which besiege me rather than that I approach them, and which may, perhaps, be only the caprice of an imagination, at all times restless, and now led astray by sorrow. It is my wish that it should be so, and you cannot doubt that, although stricken so cruelly, I wish to live—I long for it with all the strength of my soul. I cannot look without terror and affright at this separation which would prostrate my father, which would tear me from your side, which would be even

now for Charles the ruin of his future destiny, and a pall which would overshadow his future life. Lastly, shall I confess it—I am young, I reckon upon living—even to-day I am prepared to suffer, but not to descend into the grave.

However, my dear, dear master, I see my state; I feel it; and, although I know not and wish not to know the symptoms of disease, I cannot help being aware that the blood flows from all my wounds, that my strength is every day lessening, that I drag myself, rather than walk, in a path the issue of which I see not. Without experiencing any ailment, it seems to me as if life were withdrawing from my limbs to bury itself in the tumult of my heart; and, at the same time, that every shock, every recollection shakes my whole being. An indolent disposition renders every day more and more fatiguing those walks in which, till recently, I felt no other lassitude than that of my sorrow. The day before yesterday, the weather having brightened up in the afternoon, I set out to climb along with Martha that mountain crowned with ruins, against which our cottage is situated. When only half way up the short ascent, I felt my breath fail me and my strength sink. Martha urged me to descend again, but, terrified and as if fearful of confessing to myself those symptoms of weakness and decline, I determined to proceed, and I arrived at the summit exhausted under the effort which I had just made. When there, rest and the bracing nature of the air aroused me from this lassitude; but then, attacked by sudden impressions which awakened all my recollections, I bent anew under the burden, and torrents of tears relieved rather than consoled me.

From this summit the spectator discovers the lake. I had not seen it since we came to reside on the opposite side of the mountain. At the sight of these shores so well known, so animated, a thousand recollections sprang up suddenly. All the pure and beautiful joy of my early years—all the smiling plans of my youth—all this past happiness from which to-day I turn away my eyes with so much care! The neighbourhood of the parsonage was concealed from view by the rocky summit of the little

Saleve; but opposite, beyond those lovely shores, the calmness and serenity of which presented me with a spectacle at once sweet and bitter, I discovered the towers of Lausanne, and could I hinder my heart from flying there instantly, from there meeting—from there mingling with Charles's—from uniting with him in the grief of an overwhelming regret, of a frightful misfortune? Such was the vehemence of this emotion, Monsieur Prevere, such was the sudden reaction of this mortal sadness towards the potent end of joy and happiness, that the idea occurred to me of descending, of throwing myself at my father's feet, to implore his pity—to conquer his scruples—to terrify his tenderness—to bring back at least the ruins of past happiness, and to save him from himself by daring to seize the helm of my destiny. Culpable thought!—perhaps madness—but perhaps also a counsel from on High. I should have followed it, without any doubt of the recent proofs of the decline of my strength, if those gloomy thoughts of a life which is fleeing away, of an existence the thread of which the least shock, even that of happiness itself, would inevitably break, had not come to throw over the illusion a funereal veil of discouragement and despair.

It is too late. My body has become feeble for joy as for suffering; it would succumb to this intoxication of happiness, to this tardy embrace of felicity. It is a dead girl who would be restored to Charles; and this dear friend, after having lost me a first time, would be recalled to my side to see me perish in his arms. In his arms!—to me, Monsieur Prevere—to me that would still be sweet; to die beside him and for him—to give him my last days, my last looks, my last words, to receive his tender farewell and to be bedewed with his tears, to fix our place of meeting again in Heaven! Ah! let me turn away my eyes. These sweet ideas, funereal as they are, captivate and drag me towards them. But he—good God!—he, that impetuous soul, so capable of despair, of tenderness—he, the witness of this decline, of this paleness—he the witness of the death of his Louise! Imagine the rest, my dear, dear master! I cannot tell you all. At whatever time my suffering, my peril may terminate, and whatever

time God may extinguish the flickering torch of my life, let this young man be beside you, let it be from you alone that he receives, softened and blunted by your boundless love, the words which will pierce his heart, which will torture, which will madden his soul.

Ah! how deep-seated are my sorrows, Monsieur Prevere. Beneath this suffering, others hidden at first have stirred and moved, have disengaged themselves, grown and floated to the surface of my soul, there to extend and increase still more. There was a day—one day alone—when less submissive to my worthy father, for the first time in my life a rebel to his wish, I might have saved him, and with him, myself. That day, after having in vain asked pardon for Charles, I saw distinctly all that has happened; I foresaw the fatal issue; I threw myself at my father's feet; "Mercy!" I exclaimed, "mercy on myself!" He started with affright, his bowels of compassion were moved—he withdrew, abandoning the idea of constraining my wishes. At that moment all was saved—myself, Charles's future destiny, your own happiness, my dear master, and that of my father also. But I could not support the idea of transgressing in my filial submission; I could not see without a shudder this impious constraint exercised by a child over her father; I dare not place my knowledge and experience above his; I presumed upon my strength; I obeyed. In proportion as the days bring their tribute of sorrow, of decline, of mournful presage, this thought rules me more and more, it wastes me away, it already presses on my heart with all the weight of remorse, and I can find no refuge against this acute sting but in the thought of having sacrificed my inclination and life to my duty as God commands. It was His will that I should be a victim.

I shall not speak to you of my father, Monsieur Prevere, you will soon see him. It is necessary that we pass the winter here—such is the opinion of a physician. The idea neither rejoices nor saddens me. The visit of this physician, which formerly would have caused me the strongest repugnance, was only wearisome, mortally wearisome to me, Monsieur Prevere. I felt even in the presence of this stranger, and without having the power of concealing it

from my poor father, a vivid feeling of bitterness; so true it is that I am far from being resigned, and that all those ties which attach me to this world, although loosened, are not yet broken.

My father will go to the parsonage in a few days to arrange some affairs there. He will see those places again, but shall I ever see them? My heart bleeds—I leave you, my dear master, but you—shall I ever see you again?

Your LOUISE.

LXXXIV.

CHARLES TO M. PREVERE.

Lausanne.

I HAVE felt ashamed of myself, Monsieur Prevere; you have unsealed my eyes, and restored steadiness and sobriety to my soul. Your grave words, your tender reproaches, have thrown me from the delirium in which I was, into a state of gloomy dejection. I have doubted if I was ever worthy that you should have loved me, that you should have named me your pupil, that you should have called me your child. I was ashamed, I dare no longer write to you, I wished to wait until I should have once more become such that your indulgence might still welcome me, and your goodness have no longer cause to blush for me. I have subdued my transports; I have armed my determination; I have made of your counsels a support, of your wishes an aim and a goal; and to-day, less unworthy to present myself before you, I come to express to you my repentance, my sorrow, and the resolution which I have formed to regain your esteem, and no longer to aggravate your sorrow.

I have read your noble lines, my dear master. I am deeply penetrated with the meaning they contain; and I have endeavoured to follow you to that height to which you have elevated yourself. With my feeble eyes I have seen, as if beyond the clouds, in the pure azure of the heavens, that celestial balm which you have already received, and which you hold out to my young ambition. I

have felt both the misery in which I am sunk and the greatness to which I may rise by making myself, beneath the eyes of God, the friend and servant of my fellow-creatures. I have felt that, walking in the footsteps of Christ; my heart may be purified, my passion sanctified, the broken trunk of my destiny put forth new branches, clothe itself with foliage, and, at last, bear fruit. I have seen in those heights to which you have guided my steps, the source of that virtue which I venerate, of your charity which I witness, of your humility before God and before man. I have read and re-read your Christian words. I can now account for the eloquence with which you knock with a master hand at the door of your hearers' hearts. Penetrated at once with confidence and submission, reassured by your words, so filled with goodness, elevated in my own eyes on seeing you descend to me, I have endeavoured to rise---I have made an effort to hold myself erect; and if I still walk with the slow pace of a convalescent, at least I feel that my strength is returning, and that I am out of danger of those shameful falls which occasion you affliction. Oh! my dear master, my heart has bled with suffering and shame. Your lips have pardoned me, but shall I ever wash away that stain which my misdeeds have left on the spotless purity of your soul? Have you, indeed, placed to the account of the madness which overcame me, and my misfortune, misreckonings, and frightful loneliness, those ungrateful words, that impious violence, those base transports, the remembrance of which covers me with blushes? Never shall I feel thoroughly assured of this; and this doubt will be, for a long time, my hard punishment.

I have, as much as I was able, fled from my own thoughts, and have taken refuge in study and in exertion. The classes of this session are soon about to close, and if I cannot promise you that they have been of the same profit to me as if my thoughts had been free, I have still reason to believe that I shall pass the examination honour-

certain that your heart sympathises with us; I feel a gratification in speaking to you; I solicit your assistance with confidence. She is changed, but not much altered; attenuated, but not sickly. Her face preserves all its expressions of youth, of life, of sensibility. These lookings-back towards the past, these struggles to see it again, these conflicts in which I found her, are they not symptoms of strength, cause for hope? Is not much of this feebleness and this agitation which terrified me, to be attributed to my coming? I have now been here three days, and already it seems to me that she is stronger, calmer, less dejected. This morning we took a short walk towards Eseri; she did not experience much fatigue, and the people whom we met did not stare at her inquisitively, as they usually do at one who is much altered from ill health. On our return, she dined with some appetite, and I have just satisfied myself, by questioning the good woman who waits upon her, that she slept quietly.

Hasten, my dear sir, to write me your unreserved opinion; but, in any case, and to avoid all delay, let your letter precede your coming; I look for it to-morrow evening, on the return of the man who will hand you this. I remain here for a fortnight longer; I shall remain a month—for the whole winter, if necessary, if you are of opinion that this young creature can reap the slightest benefit from it, or the least solace. I conclude in again impressing on you my wishes, and assuring you of my gratitude and affectionate esteem.

PREVERE.

LXXXVIII.

THE PHYSICIAN TO M. PREVERE.

Geneva.

I HASTEN to reply to your letter, sir. Your questions are pressing, my information uncertain; still more, there is something in this young girl so interesting, and in this affection which she inspires, something so uncommon, that I cannot pen these lines without an emotion which a long experience of human sufferings and human catastrophes

has rendered little familiar to me. Nevertheless, I recall all my thoughts, I summon up all my experience, and sustained by a lively desire to enlighten you, by the deep anxiety I feel to assist in the re-establishment of the health of this young girl, so dearly loved and so worthy to live, I shall reply to your questions as promptly as is in my power.

I will not trouble you with technical terms; moreover, in this case, they would be of no great use. I have satisfied myself, both by my own examination and by the details which I have collected from the woman of whom you speak, that there is, as yet, no serious derangement of the constitution of this young lady, but merely symptoms which were occasioned, without doubt, by the struggle and the suffering to which her heart is a prey. I have very frequently seen an analogous situation; some symptoms give a passing uneasiness and soon disappear with the mere lapse of time. But it is true that in these cases the character was not, in my opinion, so formed, the sensibility so developed, or the attachment so deep. At the first glance, I was struck both by the fact that the easy demeanour of this young person, her easy carriage, her graceful form, and the facile movements of her limbs, displayed health and strength, and that her features, under an air of melancholy, gave evidence of deep-seated fear, and bitter and wasting pain. At the first glance, I saw that the outward covering was a frail one over this ardent and stormy mind; that the prescription of my art would be of little use, and that before venturing to touch this fragile body, and to inflict on it some salutary suffering, it was necessary that the moral crisis should be rendered less terrible; that time, friendship, and your assistance, should have stannched the blood which flowed from those wounds, invisible indeed, but real and deep-seated. I communicated this to her father, at the same time advising him to have recourse to you, sir, since he had the happiness of calling you his friend.

* Such is the impression which I received from the first glance, which, in our profession, we do not think it right to trust too implicitly, but which often contains some precious element of truth. All that I have seen or learned sub-

sequently has only convinced me of the justness of this first impression, in such sort that you already-foresee the reply which I have to make to your grave question—to wit, if there is anything to be attempted; or, in other terms, if there is reason to hope that were all obstacles done away with, and M. Charles recalled to Mademoiselle Reybaz's side, the latter would recover health along with happiness. Assuredly, I consider it is a necessary condition—nay, an indispensable one, that this attachment which remains interrupted, but which will never be broken, should be renewed. I urge on you, with all my strength, to obtain M. Reybaz's consent to this; but I do not think that at present any steps can be taken with regard to his daughter, without extreme danger. I think, or rather feel persuaded, that this vehement reaction from the deepest suffering towards a happiness so powerful and so unlooked-for, that this new crisis substituted for, or rather, added to, the crisis which has already been in some measure softened by time and custom, and which is declining in violence if not in bitterness, would be a great, perhaps a decisive shock to this fragile and already suffering form. If there were degrees in an attempt of this nature, I would be of opinion that something might be done, that some rays of hope might be given, and that her suffering might thus be softened, whilst awaiting the time when it could be entirely relieved. But there are none. At the first word, this young lady would seize upon the whole truth—would discover it; she would be given up to the influence of a thousand powerful and turbulent feelings, and this reaction which I esteem dangerous at this moment, would be at once produced. Add to this, the emotions which would succeed when she would receive M. Charles's letters, when she would see him again after such cruel tortures; add also, the defection, perhaps the bitterness, which she would feel in the very midst of her happiness, when she would reproach herself—unjustly in truth—but still reproach herself with having brought back that which her father had taken from her, with having wounded his scruples, and done violence to his conscience and his tenderness.

Let us wait then, sir, and whatever may happen, be assured that in Mademoiselle Reybaz's present situation,

It is either too late or else too soon to make use of the means respecting which you beg my opinion. This is my final decision. Act, prepare the way with M. Keybaz, in order that his consent may be ready when there is need of it. But, as for his daughter, limit yourself, at present, to soothing her suffering, fortifying her courage, supporting her weakness by the gentle stay of friendship and religion, and let us not venture any abrupt movement in a soil which cracks and crumbles beneath our tread.

One thing, sir, adds in my eyes to the force of the reasons which I urge upon you on this subject. It is that M. Keybaz's wife died in the flower of her age, from the consequence of her first confinement. From what M. Keybaz has told me, I conclude that she was a woman superior to her condition in life, by the elevated tone of her feelings, but also of delicate health—as these distinguished and precocious beings often are. This circumstance ought to impress on us the necessity of extreme prudence. I should have wished to collect some precise and detailed particulars with respect to the illness of this lady, but unfortunately, the physician who attended the last years of her life is long since dead. But, perhaps your recollections can throw some light on the subject; be kind enough to endeavour to recall them; you can make me acquainted with them on the occasion of the visit I propose making at the first opportunity.

I am honoured, sir, by the expression of your confidence and affectionate esteem. I am penetrated with the same anxiety and affliction which you feel, and which I partake with all my heart. Therefore, be assured that no feeling of self-love dictates what I am about to say in reply to one of your questions. I shall be ever ready, and even now am ready, if you still express the wish, to call in the assistance of some of my colleagues to unite their experience to my own. Nevertheless, I take the liberty of submitting two observations to you, which will perhaps induce you to adjourn this proceeding. The one is, that it is not here a question of a complicated malady and of imminent danger, the only cases in which this sort of consultation is customary. The other is that it would be necessary that my colleagues should see Mademoiselle

Keybaz at the same time as myself, and it appears to me that this interview would be so painful to her, and perhaps so hurtful, that we ought certainly to avoid it if possible. Be kind enough to give these reasons your consideration; at the same time, be persuaded that as far as I am concerned, I should rather be inclined in favour of a proceeding which would relieve me, in part, of a responsibility, the extent and gravity of which I feel most deeply. However it will not be long until I see you, and we can have a conversation on this point as on others.

Accept, reverend sir, the expression of my most sincere and most affectionate friendship.

MAIGRAT.

LXXXIX.

LOUISE TO HER FATHER.

Mornea.

You made me promise not to write to you, my dear father, because you feared that I should fatigue myself. Will you pardon me if I disobey you? I am certain you will, for, in your kindness, you wish to satisfy all my desires, and it is a great and a dear one to converse with you.

You left me very sad and greatly troubled. I reproach myself deeply for not having borne with more courage the sight of M. Prevere, and for having allowed you to carry away so painful an idea of me. But, dear father, these moments were short, I assure you; and to-day I am in a situation which would cause you no alarm could you see me.

Immediately after your departure, M. Prevere returned to my side. He read me a sermon, he offered up a prayer; his discourse, his piety, his tenderness, were as a balm, the sweetness of which soothed my trouble and restored me to that calmness in which I at present remain. 'Thus, my dear father, let not your forehead be clouded by these shadows which cause me so much sorrow; let your sleep be quiet and such as will restore that force and strength which you once had. You are always uneasy about your Louise; reflect, also, that she has every right and every

motive to feel the same uneasiness about you, and be calm and peaceful to make her happy.

The following day, we arranged our mode of life in an easy and pleasant manner, and one well suited to make me profit by the salutary presence of M. Prevere, who has the kindness to accommodate himself to all my whims, and to all the customs of our little household. I am indolent, you are aware, therefore we have fixed the breakfast for nine o'clock, and then if it happens that I should sleep beyond this late hour, they do not waken me; so that, dear father, the day before yesterday, your Louise was still sleeping sound and fast at eleven o'clock. So, see if you ought to have any scruples about taking your rest soundly and as long as ever you can manage. After breakfast, we proceed to seat ourselves in the balcony, where M. Prevere converses with me on pious subjects, and endeavours to soothe my soul which was so ill at ease and so forgetful of its duties. In fact, I fear, dear father, that you, and especially, myself, comport ourselves at times, in our fears and our mutual alarms, as if our confidence in God was not full and entire, but as if it varied according to the good which he does us, or the evils which he sends. Such conduct is an offence towards Him and a misfortune for us, the greatest which could reach us. I fancy to myself, dear father, that if I happened to lose you, sorrow would take possession of me as if I were a creature abandoned of Heaven, though nevertheless God and His promises would still remain to me. I fancy to myself that for want of being sufficiently submissive and attached to Him, I should outrage his goodness, his justice, and his power by my weakness and despair; I should outrage your memory in not learning to bear myself as your tenderness would have required at my hands, and by not succeeding in subduing my wishes and supporting my resolution out of love for you. You see, since I preach to you thus, that my mind is tranquil and my frame free from illness. But if afterwards, if one day God should will that I should not survive you, if He should take me to Himself before you, one thing—I assure you of it—would hinder me from looking on his dispensation as a benefit, and that would be to know you not sufficiently strong in your confidence in

Him to support this blow without sinking under it. We know not his designs; I am frailer than you—you are older than I. Dear father, while calmness still reigns, while our hearts still seek counsel together, in the enjoyment of more tranquillity, and judging with more justice, let us fill ourselves with resignation and courage, let us promise together to place our trust in that Rock of confidence and good, awaiting the hour of separation; not to outrage, never to afflict each other's memory, to act so that whichever of us two should go the first to rejoin my mother, should not carry to the regions above, the frightful idea that he leaves behind his companion, in despair and abandonment in this vale of mourning, in the anguish and night of this lower world, instead of leaving him in resignation and hope, which are the benefits and the signs of confidence, as they are the earnest of Heaven and the first fruits of our reunion in that better land.

“What a preacher,” you will say, “is this child who thus puts herself on a level with her father!” It is very true that I feel rather ashamed, but yet less so than if you had not allowed me to take all sorts of liberties which a girl less spoiled by your tenderness would not have ventured upon. You have made me the queen of your house, the princess of your household, and like the powerful, I take airs upon me, and even go so far as to tell you my sentiments. Fortunately, however, they are not those of my poor head, but I draw them from my heart, where they have been placed by my master, by M. Prevere, by him against whom neither you nor I would wish to argue, so well are we convinced that what he says is supported by the Scriptures, strengthened by his experience, and proved by his life. I am, therefore, only a child, but a child who repeats those things which her father himself might hear, which she might implore him to listen to, and like her to engrave them, in the deepest recesses of his heart.

I was forgetting that I intended to describe to you our mode of life. After this conversation we proceed, when the weather is fine, to take a walk in the neighbourhood. On Monday, we directed our steps towards Eseri; M. Prevere was conversing about myself, about you, and also

about the different objects that we met on our way. He wished to see the chateau, which at a distance has a large and imposing appearance, but which near at hand is ruined and picturesque. The good people who live there brought out a bench, and we seated ourselves on the terrace, from whence the view is so peaceful and at the same time so magnificent. Whilst contemplating it, the curate approached us, and M. Prevere having addressed some questions to him, he related to us many interesting particulars about the chateau of Eseri and that of La Roche, which we could descry in the horizon at the foot of the Bornes. After this interview, we retraced our steps across the wood to the mountain stream which is passed near Essert, by the Wolf's Bridge. There are in this direction some charming walks, which we reckon on exploring if we be still here in spring. On our return from these excursions we dine, and M. Prevere has expressed a wish that my good Martha shall continue to eat along with us, from respect, she had sometimes taken away her plate. After dinner, as the evening at this season soon draws on, I cause her to light a little fire in M. Prevere's chamber, and sometimes he converses with me—sometimes he reads aloud until the hour for retiring to rest. Then he summons Martha up stairs, and after a few moments spent in collecting his thoughts, he offers up the evening prayers, full of fervour, my dear father, lively with truth, with unction, with faith, with confidence, with that strength at once gentle and powerful which especially belongs to M. Prevere, and which while he speaks, spreads itself over the heart to fill it with comfort and restore it. He prays for the restoration to health of your child, and he does not forget to ask for patience, tranquillity, and resignation, for my father. After these prayers we separate, each to retire to rest for the night. It is a rule which M. Prevere has established for all.

You see, my dear father, that these days are neither displeasing nor barren; and I repeat to you, my nights are better. If I had the happiness to embrace you every day, I should want for nothing which, in our circumstances, I could reasonably ask for. But when I think that you have business in the parsonage, pleased to find yourself

there once more, and that they must be so happy to see you back again, this passing privation seems—lighter to me, and I rejoice with a feeling of gratitude that you have given me as a substitute, M. Prevere, whom I have not seen for so long a time. Be, therefore, without fear; lay aside the alarms which you have carried with you; and set about, in freedom of mind, the numerous affairs which require your presence at the parsonage. Remember me most affectionately to all the friends whom I have left there, and make some little donation in my name to the children; above all to my dear orphan. I have no other commission to give you, since M. Prevere has made all the arrangements for the poor who look to me for assistance. He begs that you will send my wheel, and I promise that I will endeavour to commence with it again. In passing through Geneva, on your return, do not forget to purchase me a new dress to make a present of to Martha, on the approach of the new year. See how many commissions, dear father, I have given you, and how I always impose upon your goodness.

Receive the friendly remembrances of Martha, and M. Prevere, along with the tender embrace of your daughter,
 LOUISE.

XC.

THE PRECENTOR TO M. PREVERE.

The Parsonage.

HERE I have been at the parsonage for now very nearly a fortnight, my dear sir, and I have more to do, dating from this moment, to complete many things, than on my arrival to set about them. My fault is having set the masons to work, who are folks that will spin out a job from a day to a month, as well to give the mortar of each course time to dry, as to moisten their throats, by taking a quarter of an hour at every joint. However, there was no time to lose, under pain of seeing, after some frost this winter (the almanac, which has just appeared, foretells severe weather by reason of the 9 in the date of the year) the wall of the parsonage, to the south, tumble

into the garden, carrying along with it the roof and my fagots which are underneath; without reckoning that, in these disasters, one piece of wall draws another after it, and that the belfry, which is of ancient date, being left without support, might endanger the church, as the bell already bears on that side. On this occasion, I went up to look about me a little. The bell and its clapper are all right, but all the rest hangs together merely from habit and because it has long held. In many a place the rain has washed away the plaster on the outside, leaving bare the under-coating, which drops off in scales or in fine dust, while, on the outside, besides the old cracks, which have been left unstopped at different times, I counted two new ones, so large that you could easily put your whole hand in. These two are of the past year, for the year before I did not see them, and besides, the rent is fresher there, and not filled up like the others with insects and rubbish. I reckon that next year, a cramp must be carried from one face to another, while in the mean time I have checked the evil by repairing the south wall, all the lower part of which I have had rebuilt. As for the roof of the belfry, being only twenty years old, it is as good as new, and as François the ringer says, "It is the cap of a conscript on the head of a veteran." I found there an owl, more by token that I had great trouble to catch it. They amuse themselves with it in the village.

This has brought me to think, my dear sir, that the term of a fortnight which I gave you as the utmost, will prove too short by the half. It is true you could return and see to the completion of this job; but there are others which I have a mind to undertake, being in-door jobs, which require the eye of the master, as well for the sake of economy as for the safety of household articles, and to prevent those folks from destroying at one place while they are repairing at another. However, my principal reason is a letter from the little one, in which I see among the sad remarks which it contains, that she feels herself better for your coming, and that your conversation calms her, as I had judged beforehand it would. For a long time, my dear sir, I have not heard such peaceful words from her, more by token that she describes how you live down

yonder, and that *cure* of Eseri, who told you stories on the terrace of a chateau. There are in her letter words more akin to smiles than to tears: among others, where she argues about her sleeping better, in order to persuade me to take my naps as formerly; so that these faint rays have struck me like a strong light, and, inclining to hope, I have seen in her sad remarks remains of the past tempest rather than omens of the coming storm. The letter was brought me on Thursday, while I was alone in my meadow up above; and after it had powerfully moved me in that solitude, on looking at the distant country, I found it corresponding to my impression at that moment; inasmuch as, through the fogs of evening, some rays of sunshine broke out here and there, pale, it is true, but cheering for the lateness of the season, and giving token of serene weather.

There was great need for those lines to come and to drive from my memory what I had brought away from Moruex, as well on the Saturday that you arrived, as on the Sunday morning that I left you, without even hearing a word from those lips closed with bitterness, or an endearing expression from that heart always open to you, and mute on that day from overfulness. When I had left you, finding myself alone and cooped up in that covered carriage, I was seized with melancholy, so that I desired the driver to stop, that I might descend the mountain on foot, and feel myself at least in company with the rocks, with the free air, and with the sky, which I always figure to myself as the abode of God, though I know that he is everywhere, and that his eye is in the recesses of the caverns, as well as on the bare crests of the hills. Having passed Etrembières, fearful of getting down-hearted in that box on four wheels, I made the driver get in, and taking the whip and the reins, mounted into his seat, where it was a relief to me to see the country and to manage the animal which would have been restive and prompt to scare (especially at a wine-cask, left by the side of the road) if age had not tempered his blood. But he is hard-mouthed.

Talking of beasts, Monsieur Prevere, I must tell you that, having examined the cattle belonging to the parsonage, I find that the mare has nearly served out her time; not

but what she can go out yet and be useful for something, but her teeth are worn to the very stump by long service, so that the poor beast has to give up to eating the time when she ought to sleep, which may be perceived from her ribs, visible as the pipes of an organ, and her eye which stands out for want of flesh around. It would be a good deed to have her killed, for fear that after twenty-five years' good service, she should be starved to death, in sight of her manger. As for the ass, I found him brisk and lively, doing his work, or rather letting it be done with him, unconcerned and not missing a single thistle. Finding that he is no longer wanted for the labour, and that the season is come for bad roads, when his back would be useful to Louise, to carry her to the places that she talks of, I have determined to send him to her. To-morrow morning, at daybreak, little Legrand is to set out mounted thereon and bring you this letter. You will tell him whether it is possible for you to stay another fortnight where you are, M. Dervev having agreed to supply your place as long as you please till towards Easter.

Though having read a sermon every Sunday on that mountain, I was longing and anxious to find myself in church again. I was there on Sunday, without wishing however to lead the singing, to the end that I might judge how Brelaz gets on. To tell the truth, I was little satisfied, though he made an effort to abstain in my presence from the flourishes between the lines. But his singing has little reverence in it, so that, if I compare him to a man guiding a horse, I should say, that, having a beast with an uncertain mouth, he holds the reins slack, in such fashion that it goes faster or slower instead of keeping a regular pace. He forgets that, with a precentor, it is the eye which supplies the place of the whip, and that with children who sound a false note, or old people who hold one too long, it needs a look to set them right, or a frown to keep them in line, &c.; he forgets too that, if he does not keep time himself with the organ, there are two masters commanding at once, so that one knows not which to follow. Luckily, being there myself, I assisted in the difficult places, so that as the peasants rallied to me without

appearing to do so, M. Dervey had no cause to be vexed. On coming out of church, I told Brelaz that I should lead the singing next Sunday, and that, without singing himself, he should take notice how I led.

As for M. Dervey, he delivered to our peasants a town sermon, which they thought very fine, but I am not quite sure that they understood it any better than myself, or that they found themselves taken by the collar, as is the case when the idea is true, the language strong, and the speech, like a sharpened javelin, piercing the folds which Satan has wrapped around the conscience. His discourse bore more flowers than fruit, and besides, they tired the arms to gather them, being too high above our heads. To preach to country-folks you must know them, and, in order to rouse them, you must shake them briskly. They have their virtues, which are always threatened by the public house; and they have their defects, which are not so liable to increase as they are slow and obstinate. Some need props, and not weak ones either; others need vigorous and well-applied lashes, else it is but a sound, which is carried away by the wind. So I said to myself, these town-people, just as they have not a callous skin like us country-folk, in like manner have not a callous conscience like us, if so be that those flowers without thorns are sufficient to scratch them.

For the rest, I was well pleased to see the parsonage again, both place and people, but not without some pain too. An hour before I reached it, beyond Vernier, towards the woods, my heart was moved when I saw the Bessons in the road, who, having heard some news of my coming, were walking to meet me. I shook hands with all of them, and kissed the wife who had stood sponsor with me for the Redards' third child. As I could not have them with me in the car, I got out to walk beside them; but there, at the turn of the Chouilly road, I found all the Duruzes sitting on the edge of the ditch, waiting for me, and in particular the grandfather, now at the age of eighty-two, on whose account they had halted; further on, there were the Redards, with my godson, together with poor Widow Brachoz, who had joined them, and Widow Crozat, whom I received kindly, remembering that

she has reconciled herself with the good God. Lastly, near the fountain, there were the Frozets, the Durards, Jacqueline the one-eyed, François the ringer, Elise Roset, little Combat, and Louise's orphan. To all and each I had to repeat the news from Mornex, which I gave them cheerfully, though in these moments of joyful meeting, it was painful to me to mix the sad with the jovial. However, I kept up till, from the foot of the parsonage meadow, the sight of the little one's window, and the trees, the closes, and the orchards, brought to my remembrance scenes of country amusements and of daily pleasures—then my heart was swollen, and bidding them leave me, I withdrew into the field, where, having sat down that I might not be seen, I gave vent to tears, abundant though bitter. It was Douzak who, having come up, shamed me by the vehemence of his caresses, so that I conquered this weakness and walked towards the parsonage. With a view to cut short the painful impressions which I had yet to endure, I went straightway to Louise's room, where, having opened the shutters, the light of evening entered, and showed me two of her flower-pots, the plants in which were withered and dead. This sight was a cruel one to me.

When the afternoon catechism was over, M. Dervev set off again. Antoine came to pay his respects, along with the labourer, and the people engaged for the vintage, which is over. The wine will be harsh, and not so abundant as was expected before that hail in September. With the exception of the quantity required for your use, and one-third for our own, I have sold it all at eight sous the quart, hard cash, which supplies me with money for settling down yonder; the rest must be deducted from my hay, by which some advantage is to be made, there having been no want of water in my meadows, while the drought has destroyed the after-grass everywhere around. This sale effected, I shall have to account for one third of the expense of that unfortunate youth, as I have told him, and without considering that you ought to prevent me. I say nothing of the doleful impressions which I experienced at each of the places with which the remembrance of him is associated, and where I see a stain, as it were, pro-

ceeding from the infamy of his parents. I have been asked no questions about him in the hamlet, which has been a real relief to me. Is this delicacy out of consideration for me? I believe so, and the more, as being ignorant of what was under the veil which Champin has lifted, without blaming me, they regret the unfortunate lad quite as much as they pity Louise.

Next day I proceeded to business, and set apart so much of the crops as we must keep, for the purpose of selling the surplus in due time; and on the following day, which was Tuesday, I made an excursion to Geneva, to purchase articles, in execution of an idea, which I will tell you by-and-by. I had some intention of giving Champin a call, as I promised at the time; but on reaching the town, at the turning to Contance, whom should I see from the car in which I was but him facing a dealer in vegetables, bargaining for a bunch of turnips, and, instead of alighting to bid him good-day, I was only afraid that he should turn about and spy me. And yet it will soon be seven years since we saw each other; but it was he who lifted that veil and exposed those stains, and my aversion to the thing has extended to him by whom it was disclosed, though with a good intention. For the rest, in the short time that I saw him, he seemed to me to have grown old: having always held himself upright and with pride in his gait; but his back is arched, his legs swollen and clumsy, and he is obliged to walk with a stick, that third leg of the old and infirm.

My idea, Monsieur Prevere, is this: to repair thoroughly and beautify that chamber of Louise's, which has never been done up since Theresa, my deceased wife, brought her into the world there. It occurred to me whilst I was contemplating those withered plants and the flowers scattered on a floor so old, that the knots of the wood, having withstood better the wear of walking, stand up like the tops of paving-stones, while the wood-work is red with age, and the wall covered with that flowered paper which, having seen its best days, is now much faded; especially as it has been patched in places with pieces having their colours fresh and bright. I found that, these repairs being done, a new window would be required,

and a new door too, the old one having the lower panel split, and, being too small for the frame, does not shut close, admitting the air, if not the light. But, though well aware that if you meddle with a ruin you have a house to rebuild, I could not withstand the temptation of going to that expense, finding the more pleasure and satisfaction in it by reason of its bearing so heavily upon my means. I have found in it an aliment since I have been here, and I will lay up, as a provision for the winter, the expectation of installing my daughter in spring into this apartment, which I shall have decorated for her reception.

I therefore set masons and carpenters to work; they are making progress, and everything is assuming by degrees an air of youth and elegance, assorting so well with that of the girl, that I cannot help asking myself, how I could see her for so many years in this den, without being struck by the idea. A new floor, of sound and seasoned fir, is laid down, with two bands of walnut-tree which cross precisely in the middle. Finding that the rafters above agreed very ill with that clear, bright floor, I had them covered with a ceiling of plaster, to which they are fitting a moulding, which forms a border, standing out three inches from the wall. On the other hand, I am getting the window made under my own inspection; it will have six good-sized panes, and a fastening with a brass button; also the door, of oak, with a new lock, shutting both from within and without; the whole will be delivered next Thursday, and set up on the following day. The room being small, a chest of drawers would have been better suited to it than that large walnut-tree wardrobe; but I was certain that Louise, as well as myself, would not know her room again without that piece of furniture, which was brought to the house by her mother. I have therefore left it, that the new dwelling may not be less prized than the old one. In like manner, I have not altered anything about the bed, on which I slept before I was married, and which, besides, it would be difficult to match for solidity and durability. The last thing was the table; finding it in good condition, I preferred going to the expense of refitting the three chairs

and the sofa, having horse-hair, and likewise that watered flowered stuff which I inherited intact from Theresa, after having given it to her. Modest as she was, the blue and the rose sprinkled over a cinnamon ground, appeared to her too sumptuous for her condition, even on holidays.

It was to have these put to rights that on Tuesday I took them to one of those upholsterers who understand the thing, and give you back your stuff in its lustre, if not the whole; besides, I measured mine before I gave it. On the same occasion, I went and chose a paper for the room, and from among the numerous patterns which they showed me, I chose from instinct one that will please Louise, or I am mistaken. It is a light ground, on which are seen green sprays twined together and birds among them, and from bough to bough swings a shepherdess of whom you would say, on seeing her dress waved by the wind, that she is floating in the air. The man I bought it of assured me that the colours were fast, especially the yellow and the green, and that I had put my hand on one of the most charming of his papers. At the same shop, I bought a looking-glass twelve inches by seven, in a frame of red wood, with two knobs to support it in a leaning position. It is already in its place, and it is delightful to see the light which it attracts when reflecting the sky and the lime-trees; you would fancy that it was another window. I brought all home the same evening, except the chairs, which will come on Saturday when the Piozets return; they are going to carry their straw to market. Straw is dear, and that is another reason for getting rid of the mare, if, besides, she is liable to lose her flesh for want of teeth.

In completing the new arrangement of the room, I was forced to break open the table drawer to get at the key of the wardrobe, being obliged to empty it before we could take it out sideways at the door, which is narrow. In a corner of the centre compartment, I found some papers, the sight of which was painful to me, Monsieur Prevere, so that having begun to turn them over, I very soon put them out of my sight; they were the letters of that unfortunate youth. I considered whether I should

destroy them, and had an inward battle to fight on this subject: respect for the feelings of my daughter prevailed, added to which, having broken open the drawer, and acting in secret, an instinct restrained me. But I shall never be easy till my house is rid of those lines, flowing from a polluted source, and those pages far from the touch of my Louise. For the present, without reading them, I shall put them away, resolved that they shall no longer stain that abode which I have beautified, and which would appear dark and gloomy if I knew that they were shut up in it. How many years will it yet take to efface all traces of that unfortunate lad!

I have also got hold of her account-book, which is, page after page, a list of charities, with a thing or two here and there for herself. But among those charities there is one that troubles me; it is larger in amount than the others, and is entered every three months, from the first to the third, without the name of any person. I have found the amount come to two hundred and fifty florins a year for about four years past, which, considering this larger figure, looks more like a pension than a charity; and so I have puzzled my brains to guess what so striking and so secret a thing can be. I do not conceal from you, Monsieur Prevere, that ideas have occurred to me concerning that unhappy youth, and cruel ones, as the last payment was in the week that we left the parsonage; whence I might infer that Louise had not done her duty by me in this. However, I could not believe this unless I were to see it, because there would seem to be no motive for this charity, since you and I between us make a provision for the poor fellow. So I am left in suspense on this point. I have also received a letter for her which has likewise made me uneasy, inasmuch as under the envelope stamped Geneva, I perceive through the paper another address, as of a letter coming from some other place, and reaching the person for whom it is intended, by leaps and bounds. I have connected this mystery with the other, and am extremely anxious to have it cleared up; without, however, opening the letter, which would be an outrage to my child, hitherto so upright and irreproachable. And yet, would it be any fault of hers if

it did come from Lausanne, if he had dared to write to her without her desire or participation?

But I drive away these ideas, which, if they should get the upper hand, would deprive me of the little peace I enjoy, and the inclination to prosecute these preparations. I had rather believe that my injunction has been obeyed, and that my confidence in her has never been abused; only if you know anything, Monsieur Prevère, I trust to you to inform me, that we might together apply a remedy, and you, rather than I, who, chafed, might chafe that girl in return. Kiss her for me, and do not conceal from her what it is right she should know about that letter, and which may amuse her; and tell her that I begin to have a glimpse of the day when I shall see her again, never more to part from her.

With respect, your affectionate

REYBAZ.

XCI.

M. PREVÈRE TO THE PRECENTOR.

Mornex.

I HASTEN to reply to you, my dear Monsieur Reybaz, in order to banish your suspicion, and to prevent all imprudence on your part. But that is not the principal object of this letter. I propose to attack boldly your legitimate prejudices, and to strike a last blow at the portal of your heart. I do not doubt that this time I shall succeed; therefore, what I ask of God is that after having obtained from you an immense sacrifice, we may obtain from Him an immense blessing.

But, in the first place, my dear Reybaz, banish all mistrust respecting Charles. I answer to you for him as for myself. Never for an instant has he dreamed—nor will he dream—of violating his promises and of deceiving your confidence and mine. At the very moment when you communicate your suspicions to me, he dares not to write to Martha, because she is too near Louise, and he thinks that even that is forbidden him. At the very moment when you allow yourself to imagine that he

accepts from your daughter secret bounty, his prayer to me is that I should permit him to earn his own subsistence. Lastly, at the very moment when you picture to yourself this young man as capable of disobedience and deceit, he is displaying the highest qualities of mind and the most difficult virtues. Plunged in despair and battling with a thousand disgusts, he enters on the career which I have chosen for him; he girds himself up to consecrate to the service of God and man a life stripped of happiness, and heart-broken by all the phases of misfortune. This is Charles's conduct, Monsieur Reybaz; therefore, of him have no distrust. If there is any mystery contained in this letter—in these aims, be certain that it cloaks some noble and Christian deed, do not venture to doubt it, nor attempt to raise the veil which shrouds Louise's charity.

I now come to the subject which fills my whole mind. I have seen Louise. All my fears, all my forebodings were but too well founded. She is wasting away—she is going fast. These words are frightful to hear, my dear Reybaz, they will torture your ear, they will pierce your heart; but it is necessary you should hear them, or else you would run the risk of misconceiving the all-powerful force of the motives which must instantly influence your determination. Annul the declaration which you have made respecting Charles, and unbind me from the engagement which I entered into towards you. It is necessary that you consent to restore Charles to Louise. Not that I dare affirm that this tardy resolution will save her; not that it is even possible to communicate it to her now, nor even for a long time to come perhaps; but, in order that we may be prepared to let in a ray of hope into this desolate heart, as soon as her frame shall have resumed some strength, or to attempt a last resource if her health and strength continue to decline. I wait your reply, therefore, with impatience; for Louise is more at peace. My conversations have taken effect upon her, I have succeeded in moderating her sorrow, in raising her courage a little, and every moment may chance to find a happy opportunity of adding to this dawning calm the gentle restorative of a first gleam of hope. I shall not do so until I have obtained your authority: but every day—every moment—

is precious. Do not contest the point; do not, I entreat, refuse. It is from the brink of your child's grave that I speak to you, that I adjure you; if you repulse my prayers, it only remains for me to prepare her to descend unto it.

To these motives so imperious, and which I urge in the name of the worthy physician who has seen Louise, shall I add others? I will do so, although I am in haste; I will do so, in order that I may not, at any future time, have to address to myself tardy and cutting reproaches. You have listened too much, Monsieur Reybaz, to the instinctive repugnances which your duty as a Christian ought to have subdued, even when your interest, your tenderness as a father, did not cry aloud to you to stifle these creeping and dangerous voices. You accuse yourself before God of cherishing antipathies—of being slow to love; but, before God, also, you give to these the empire of your heart, when it depends only upon yourself to banish them from it, when everything makes it a necessity and a duty to do so. My good friend, to the work now!—probe these instincts; assure yourself that these burdens of which you spoke to me are not the leaven of pride, that enemy of God and of man—that false inmate of the heart which blinds, which destroys, which crushes; and, if you recognise that such is the case, strangle it yourself in the close embrace of charity. Remember the day when you heard its appeal in the church, and when from having acted uprightly in the sincerity of your heart, you again recovered peace with yourself and peace with God. An hour before that appeal, you reasoned as you do at present, you approved of your conduct, without being for that reason content with it; you justified without having power to absolve yourself. An hour after, you shed tears, and yet you were comforted; you had made a sacrifice, and yet, nevertheless, you found that you had made a gain; you had done violence to your instinct, and your antipathies, and yet—admirable result!—you were at peace, you were satisfied, you were happy as if you had done nothing but follow the vent of your desires. These, then, are the immortal and indescribable blessings granted to charity by our heavenly father: these are the rewards which he promises to you at this hour, as formerly,

as ever, if you listen to His voice, if you perform His teachings.

I should have spoken to you thus, my dear Keybaz, even if no motive drawn from Louise's situation had induced me; but if I look to Charles himself, do you think that I have ever been able to acquiesce in the motives which led you to dismiss him, and which you seem to look upon as not to be shaken—nay, as sacred? Think you that before God, his birth, his opprobrium, as it pleases you to call the misfortune of this young man, can justify a longer resistance on your part? But, my dear friend, show me, without the bounds of this vulgar and cruel prejudice which you obey, that law which obliges you to punish a child for the sins of its father. Show me, in the Gospel, that law which, on the contrary, in the circumstances in which you are placed,—when Louise loves Charles and has chosen him for her partner—that law which does not command you to reach out a hand to this unfortunate, to save him by drawing him towards you, and to wash away his disgrace by giving him your daughter. Ah! Monsieur Keybaz, you whom I once knew so upright, so sincere, so pious, read, read once more the commandments of our Saviour; examine yourself afterwards, and say if you will fulfil them by rebelling against the suggestions of simplest humanity, by losing your child in order to avoid accepting an imaginary disgrace, and which would not reach her, even were it real a thousand times over? For it is a secret still, this disgrace, and it depends upon your friend that it should remain so for ever. But, even were he to divulge it, where is the stain? Is Charles not my pupil, my well beloved child? Is he not honoured beyond a thousand others by the choice and affection of Louise? This stain, which would remain on his name—the only stain—would it not be that alone which you would imprint there, by refusing him your alliance? Once more, where is the stain? where is the shame? The shame! Great God! It is in the heart of those who would not honour your charitable conduct; it is on the forehead of those who would dare to decry it; it is on that world too petty, too paltry—perhaps too vain, to approve you openly, but also

too good, too quick to see what is fair, noble, and disinterested, not to honour and to bless you in secret.

But I feel shame, my dear friend, to urge these considerations so long upon you. It is to misconceive both your fatherly heart and your Christian submission to the teachings of our divine master. Hasten to send me a reply; unbind me from this fatal engagement which I have taken with so much regret, and kept with so much suffering. Let me be free, if it is not even now too late to warm this soul which is so fast becoming numb and cold, to keep on earth this angel so ready to wing her flight towards the skies.

Remain at the parsonage as long as it is necessary. I accept the offer of my friend M. Dervev; it would be impossible for me to leave Louise at present. I saw the physician yesterday—in all that I ask from you he agrees with me. Hasten, therefore; let no consideration delay you, and let me have your letter before to-morrow—before many hours.

Your affectionate

P'RLVERE.

XCII.

THE PRECENTOR TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

The Parsonage.

THE midnight hour has just struck, Monsieur P'revere. I have had the pen in my hand for these two hours, but the vehemence of the tumult which you have raised in a father, already full of misery, has not allowed me to use it. I reckon, nevertheless, that I shall be able to finish by daylight, and to dispatch this paper, which shall bring you my maturely weighed, and not the less fixed decision.

I thought myself at peace, and sufficiently defended on that side, on which you have struck your hardest blow, Monsieur Prevere, and to tell you the truth, I should have dreaded it from anybody else before I had feared it from you. When, some months ago, these frightful things were revealed, twice I forgave that butcher of my life, twice I had given my Louise, the daughter of Theresa, the fruit

of her womb, and the only child of my heart, to that lad picked up out of the mud, and whom I never loved, but durst not hate. I imagined that I had settled matters with the Creator, having cut into the quick of my pride, and tilled, not without sweat, my part of the field of charity. And after all, I have done nothing, if I have not brought into my family the stain which is not to be washed away!—if I do not put into my daughter's bed the offspring of adulterers!—if I do not give her for a mother, in place of Theresa, a creature steeped in crime, still living, and infamous with the scent of jails! Away then with charity! I will not do those things. God is mighty to constrain, but unless he crushes my will I am not the one who will assist to bend it. I have not read in his law, that one has been given an only daughter in the world for nothing but to steep her in mire; and I shall wait, therefore, till he gives this new commandment, newer than the other. Let him speak, then, let him strike, let him thunder!.....Then I shall give her up, but the voice of a mortal shall not induce me to stoop to what seems to me crime, infamy—not even your voice, Monsieur Prevère, though accustomed to accede to it, because I respect it.

And how far from being familiar to you is that cruelty which you practise upon me in telling me that to save Louise, I must absolutely cross that bridge of ignominy and fling myself into that slough; that it is the will of God, that it is my duty, and that it depends on me to fulfil it!—in setting before me that frightful choice either to soil the unstained brow of her whom you call an angel, or to be her merciless parricide!.....No, no! I am crushed by affliction; my life is more miserable than death and its anguish; but in this moment of infernal torture, I am to have only the choice between that twofold horror.....No, no! the wrath of God has its limits; his arm forbears to strike with all its force; he has not sent into the world such afflictions. He can take my daughter from me, but it cannot be his pleasure to make me buy her at the price of infamy. He will take her from me, do you say? it shall be his pleasure, then, not my fault.

Monsieur Prevère, you blame my instincts, my dislikes; I have also blamed them, I have striven to stifle

them, and I have stifled them twice. Nevertheless, that barrier of infamy I have declared to you from the first that I would not pass. In my turn I upbraid your charity! I have always repelled that unfortunate creature, and you have always brought him back to me. You brought him up along with my daughter. You never sought to inform yourself when you could have done it, when it was your duty, when the knowledge of that capital taint would have saved all! This is what your charity has done! Nevertheless, when the catastrophe arrived, I respected—I may say, revered it. You make me an ill return now, and for a good Christian, as I know you to be, and as you are, you lay upon me too heavy a burden when I am already crushed under that which I am bearing—a burden of which you ought to take your share with me, or rather—but I beg your pardon if the affliction which I am in causes me to fail in respect for you—a burden which is that of misfortune and not of sin, and which we ought to bear jointly, assisting one another, sticking close together to lighten, not to overwhelm by thrusting it from one to the other.

Recall, then, your cruel demand, Monsieur Prevère, and hasten to loose me from that chain of anguish, the knot of which compresses and galls me so long as you have not relieved me from it; hasten, or if I resist and attack you, where would be the concord? In other times, I should have given myself up captive to your reasons, but now it is your part to yield; for, as to myself, were I but to try, I should never get over it. I repeat it, I cry to you, I will not drink this cup! I will serve the unfortunate youth; I will love him if it must be so, but I will not draw him to me; and if my will has any influence after death, never, no never, shall my daughter bear his name! I tell you this now, Monsieur Prevère, in order that your upright mind may remember it, so that my memory may not be outraged, so that I may at least go down to the grave in peace.

You have the papers, you can read them; for I cannot suppose that you wrote them, though you propose to me similar things for her whom you love in common with me, and whose fair fame you must cherish as well as myself.

As for me, I shall not look at them, I stop far short of that; scarcely can I finish reading Champin's account, every line of which made me feel as if my Louise was stained for having eaten, talked, lived, for so many years in familiarity with that unfortunate creature. Scarcely can I force my pen to signify obscurely to you what your protégé was, finding it a frightful subject to dwell upon, and not charitable to enter into it before you. But read, read those papers! You will there see the impurities of the flesh: that child, the offspring of the accursed commerce of two savage malefactors.....read on! you will see the vagabond life, the beggary, then the thieving, then the robbery, then justice acquainted at length with so many crimes, sending father and mother to rot in the subterranean darkness of dungeons. And I am to give my daughter to their bastard! I am to associate that lily of the fields with that bramble of the deserts! And it is Monsieur Prevere who proposes this, or rather who enjoins it, with all that authority of pastor and of friend, which I have never treated but with respect!.....No, read, read, you who love Louise and her father; read, and let your heart return to equity and justice! I refer you to the papers and add no more. My resolution is immoveable as the rock of the mountains.

But you will not restore to me that temporary tranquillity which I was enjoying when your heaviest blow came upon me. These operations seem to me but a dream. That room, where my affliction was suspended, as if to repose there upon a flowery branch; that room, I take no further pleasure in,—those decorations grieve me—that watered stuff, that fresh wood-work, wring my heart! A new abyss has opened, and not entirely closed again; clefts are left, into which I shall not fall, but which open in my sight, and distress me by recollection. Even a distant idea, which had its comfort, has dropped, as it were, from my mind and sunk from its chaos. Some time ago, I received a letter from Madame de la Cour, entreating that, God and time assisting, we should both seek to put an end to our disappointments by the union of our children. I replied that, though I disliked her son, this idea had occurred to me too; but,

though I should do nothing against, I was powerless to do anything in favour; then seeing Louise more tranquil, the crisis proceeding towards its term, the unhappy youth removed to a distance from us, I clung more and more, from day to day to this scheme, as to a resource remote but at least possible and free from poison, as a security for my lifetime and after I am gone..... But, without your concurrence, under your threat, surprised when I conceived myself guarded, disturbed where I was enjoying safety, as I thought, I feel the vanity of all respite, of all hope; a distrust of every support on which I lean, of every rope to which I cling, and the dreary void, the darksome nought, make me their prey!

It is now daybreak. I have lost no time, that these lines might reach you, my dear sir.

Your afflicted

REYBAZ.

XCIII.

M. PREVERE TO CHARLES.

Morn'g.

I TAKE advantage, my dear child, of a leisure moment to reply briefly to your letter. If it were not on a subject which absorbs both our hearts, and on which I must converse with you with the greatest reserve, I would write to you more frequently, for I feel the necessity of doing so, and every day I feel more and more that your affection is my greatest blessing, the only one which remains to me pure and whole.

Your letter, my dear boy, made me shed tears of joy. Not that it surprised me, but, on the contrary because it answered the expectations I had formed of you. Your repentance has cheered me, your resolution has filled me with hope, I have seen that in granting you my whole esteem I was not deceived, and that in reckoning on your piety and courage I had not expected too much from you. Sweet conviction, Charles, which has made me taste of happiness even in the bosom of affliction—precious sign of the empire which you have been able to assume over

yourself, and of what I may expect of you if to this trial it is God's good pleasure to add others. He will spare them, as I hope; but if it be otherwise, let me no longer have to stretch out a hand to you, but much rather let me, in my turn, seek support from you. You are now a man, my child: the vigour which years bring you, they take away from me. I feel with sadness that I have no longer the same strength to bear suffering as formerly; and that if my courage does not abandon me, my back, at least, bends under the burden.

I approve entirely, my dear boy, of your project of maintaining yourself by your own exertions, in order to impose on you the salutary yoke of duties and necessities. Like you, I cannot imagine a more efficacious means to cheat your suffering and to give strength and elasticity to your mind. In like manner I approve of the mode of life which you have chosen, and of this acquaintance which you are about to form with this young man who is bringing up one of his brothers. You will find in this new situation burdens and difficulties which will be sweet and pleasant to you, and in this humble friendship an assured delight. It is sufficient for me to be certain that you look upon, at need, as your own, all that I have, and that you reckon on me as on a tender father. For I am so to you, my dear boy, and I am proud to be so. Speak of me to your friend; tell him with how much pleasure I shall one day make his acquaintance, and let me not, from this day, be a stranger in affection to one who shares with me the friendship of my Charles.

You will inform me more in detail of everything which concerns your new method of life, when you are fully settled down to it. I wish also to know what lessons you give and to whom they are given. According to the disposition of mind you bring to this occupation, which is reputed unpleasant and tiresome, you will find in it, I venture to assure you, both interest and pleasure. You commence it with the aim of being useful to yourself, and I applaud you for so doing, for, in the situation in which you are, this is a virtue; but if, in a short time, you add to this motive that of being sincerely useful to your young scholars, you will see your task become less, the hours fly

past more lightly, and the duties which fatigued you become a delightful enjoyment. Lastly, my dear boy, even in this lonely profession, in this obscure calling, whilst ever rendering yourself useful and agreeable to the world, make yourself, at the same time, independent of it, by fixing in the secret recesses of your heart your whole hopes in God. This, you will remember, is what I always taught you, in pointing out to you, that in Him alone is the goal at which our virtues aim, where our desires are at rest, where our hopes are realized, and that besides Him there is no other. I have always taught you this; you have always understood it; but the hour is now at hand to put these things into practice, without disdaining to apply His lofty truths to humble duties. The humble duties, my child, are the true, the pure, the lovely duties before God; because they are the only ones which are purged of that worldly ray of glory, of celebrity, of display, in which vanity shares with conscience.

I shall now speak to you of Louise. I am beside her; it is from Mornex that I write to you. If I had only to speak to you of the courage of this dear girl, of her resignation, of the simple and pious manner in which she supports grievous recollections and cruel separations, I might still, my child, rejoice your heart, and hold out to you, in this girl, the fairest example which I could place before you to follow. I might tell you—I, who read her soul—who know the depth of her affections and the greatness of her sacrifice, that I have not yet met, on the path of life, a creature so worthy of admiration and respect. I might—commencing by confessing to you that I arouse and warm my piety at hers, and that I sanctify myself by her virtues—I might declare to you that no one is worthy of her love, that no one will be worthy of her love and preference, but him who will be himself distinguished by lofty piety and by true and heartfelt virtues. This is why, also, your last letter has restored me to security and happiness, in restoring my confidence in you, my esteem for you—in even adding to it—for I am aware it is more difficult to arise from a fall than never to have fallen at all. If, therefore, you wish henceforth not to descend from that rank in which this young, this angelic creature has

with justice and discretion placed you, in giving you her heart; in choosing you for her partner when she was free to do so, persevere—wing your flight towards the lofty regions of resignation that knows no sinking, of courage without transports and without violence, of patient gentleness, of self-denial, of true and heartfelt renunciation—that is to say, of renunciation without selfishness, without gloom, without abandonment of duty, with cultivation of the social affections and of the practical every-day duties. Persevere, I repeat; for of these sublime and Christian virtues, she is the model and the martyr, for she would be mistaken in you, she would have placed upon an unworthy head the fair and glittering crown of her tenderness and her esteem, if you did not possess them yourself, or if you were incapable of winning them.

If you have felt the truth of these words, Charles, let me now speak to you as a man, and as a man worthy of Louise. You wish me to give you the assurance that she supports her trial, and that her situation inspires me with no fear. I cannot do so, my dear boy, without a feeling of insincerity towards you. Her health is injured, her strength has declined; I remark in her the slow progress of a sad wasting away, and I no longer reckon upon anything but the assistance of God, which I implore every moment of the day. A skilful physician whom we have consulted, assures me that she is now in a crisis, the happy termination of which is perhaps at hand, but at the same time he thinks that she cannot, without danger, leave this retreat, where the winter is milder than in the plains, and he fears for her every shock, every alarm. These opinions have not reassured me; I have come to take M. Reybaz's place beside her, as his affairs oblige him to make a short stay at the parsonage; and, on seeing Louise again after three months of absence, I was wounded to the heart with grief. However, since the first few days, I have regained some hope: it seems that my presence has had a beneficial effect upon her, that my conversations restore her to some degree of calmness, or at least bring back a little of that melancholy which is so soothing to the soul after severe misfortunes. She is little changed; her appearance is not altered; she is graceful as ever.

Every day we take a walk together, and if her appetite be still weak, her nights are better. This, my dear boy, is the entire truth; it will wound your heart as it has done mine, but it will not cast you down more than me. You will learn to wait without abandoning yourself to despair, and you will learn to let confidence take the place of murmuring in your heart, and prayer the place of stormy transports. It is because I reckon on this that I have unveiled to you my alarms; if I am deceived, my last blessing will be taken from me—you will be ever my *protégé*, but no longer my hope, my glory, the support and measure of my old age.

But I must have done. I have handed the watch to Antoine, and your presents to Martha. Both expressed to me their pleasure and their gratitude. I rejoice that you felt of yourself that it was not fitting to write to Martha, and I see in the feelings you express towards her a proof of the uprightness of your heart. Yes! this woman has been your kind and tender mother; she has been your mother, and she is every day a mother to Louise. You are both only acting justly in vowing a filial love to this poor servant, so worthy in her simplicity, so humble in her devotion.

I shall remain here for some time yet; but continue to address your letters to me at the parsonage, whence they will reach me. Adieu, my dear child; love me as you are loved by me, and let our common sorrow be soothed by our mutual resignation to the decrees of the Most High. I embrace you.

P'REVÈRE.

XCIV.

CHARLES TO M. P'EVÈRE.

Louanne.

No, my master, no, my dear master, no; I will not deceive your expectations. But, good God! to what length is complaint permitted me?—my sobs choke me; but do not fear, I will subdue myself. But, at this frightful

moment, permit the tears to flow, permit the cry of grievous suffering to escape from my bursting bosom.

Louise wasting away! Good God, take my life and save hers! Louise waste away! She is growing cold, she is fading! Monsieur Prevere, I must fly to her side; I must see her. I shall warm her by my caresses, I shall rouse her by my embrace, by my breath. Am I then a monster whose very approach slays, whose attachment withers? Speak to her father, Monsieur Prevere! Tell him that I—that I alone, know the secret of rejoicing his Louise's heart, of touching her wounds without irritating them, and of lulling her sorrows to rest. Tell him that I wish not her hand—that I abandon it for ever: but her heart—it is I who know how to penetrate its recesses, to light it up with joy, to fill it with calmness and to reanimate it with heat, with life. Tell him this; conjure him to hasten—to summon me. I feel a presentiment of it; I will save his daughter for him, and, after having saved her, I will fly.

Good God!—what?—can this be true? Do you mean that there is danger? Death! Ah! unheard of misfortune! Frightful blow! Doubt which chills with terror! Who is this M. Reybaz, then, who kills his child?—who holds her in his clutches?—who will not let her go when she cries for mercy? I offend you, Monsieur Prevere, but I speak the truth. How can I comprehend? how can I conceive such pitiless determination. I am a foundling, but not infamous; and rather than restore his daughter to me he is about to destroy her—to destroy us both, and himself along with us. Impenetrable mystery! Am I then ignorant of something which others know? Am I sullied without being aware of it? Ah, tell me, my dear master, tell me! What matters it to me? I shall at least know why this father is so barbarous; and, in place of detesting his cruelty, I shall excuse, I shall justify it—I shall curse myself alone.

Angelic Louise! Heavenly girl! Adorable and adored creature! No, no; I will not descend from that rank in which you have placed me, by fixing on me your love and your choice, model and martyr of all the virtues, all the affections! No! You will not have to blush for having

granted me your esteem. No; I will follow your footsteps; I will sustain myself; I will steep myself to the lips in your example. Your image alone excites my transports, fills me with invisible strength, and this crown will never be taken away from me. I swear it in your presence, my worthy master; I swear it solemnly. I will persevere; I will mount and I will not descend; I will render myself worthy, equal, and not inferior; I will gird myself up for the combat; I will triumph in the struggle: I will conquer these sublime and Christian virtues. Am I not the friend of Louise, the spouse of her soul? Am I not the hope of Monsieur Prevere, the treasure of his old age?

Reckon, therefore, on me, my dearly-beloved master. This crisis of sorrow will not overwhelm me. Thanks to you, I feel myself in the way of overcoming it, I have felt your words—You will not have failed. My heart is pierced with a thousand stinging arrows; but I govern its bounds, and it is without delirium, without transport, that I urge upon you, with all my strength, to implore M. Keybaz to summon me to him, to trust to my tenderness for his daughter the care of fortifying her courage without disturbing her calm, and to add to this melancholy the leaven of hope and contentment. My misfortune counts for much in the suffering of this convalescent angel; let her therefore see me satisfied and full of courage. My impetuosity counts for much in her apprehension; let her therefore see me changed, firm, prepared for everything. I shall take a mountain of suspicion, of anguish from her heart; and then this crisis will be ended, the gnawing sting will be withdrawn, the canker-worm will cease its labours, and, on the wing of peace, strength and health will return. The idea occurred to me to set out immediately, to throw myself at M. Keybaz's feet. He is alone at the parsonage; I could trouble only him, irritate him alone; but I feared to displease you.

I wait a few lines—a word from you, my dearly-beloved master; you will not leave me in this mortal anguish.

Your affectionate

CHARLES.

XCV.

M. PREVERE TO CHARLES.

Morneer.

Do not attempt to move—to show yourself—my dear boy. What you have asked me to do I have already tried, but without success. Yes; it is your birth. There are circumstances of which you are ignorant, which attach me to you, which terrify M. Reybaz, and which are unknown to Louise. These circumstances you will learn now, my child, for it is no longer fitting to conceal them from you, and you are prepared to become acquainted with them. But have patience. At this moment I am wholly Louise's, and I want both time and leisure to make those revelations to you, which will take from you nothing which you have, which will change in no respect your career, which will not be even a trial worthy of the courage and elevation of mind which your letter breathes. I have received your solemn promise—I bear it in my heart as a present you have given me, and which repays me for all the cares I have bestowed upon you, and all the tears which you have cost me. Blessed be God who has blessed my work!

On a future occasion, I will speak to you of Louise. I have nothing to add to that which I communicated to you so recently on this subject. Adieu, my child, I embrace you tenderly.

PREVERE.

XCVI.

THE PRECENTOR TO LOUISE.

The Parsonage.

I HAVE derived much comfort from your letter, my child; and, but for these masons who are rebuilding the wall, and fifty other matters which crowd upon me in consequence of my being here, most assuredly I should have answered you sooner. To-day, I will but half do it, as well because I have not time, as because I shall see you again very shortly.

I have executed all your commissions, and, in particular. I have given your orphan a pair of shoes just like strong leathern shoes, inasmuch as the upper leather is varnished, and the wooden sole coloured along the edge. They warrant them good and strong. At any rate, I have given the girl to understand that they are for wear on Sunday, and when the roads are dry. This present gave her great pleasure, and she was at no pains to conceal it. Only, I suspect that she could not wait for Sunday; for, on Friday, I saw her going to the fields, and there seemed to me to be something shiny at her feet; and, besides, instead of running to salute me as usual, she fell to driving those goats, and disappeared behind Olivet's hedge. A love of finery is the instinct of the sex, and, since the days of Eve, more than one has yielded to temptation.

I shall bring you (besides a letter which has arrived here for you) the spinning-wheel and the best of my flax, both in the rough, that you may feel it, and prepared for spinning, that you may make us some thread: in this way the work will be more varied. From the hemp to the shirt is a considerable distance; wherefore, having examined mine, I find that, in the coming year, several of them will require to be replaced; and I have spoken to the weaver, who engages to let me have a piece in September, provided that he receive the thread by Easter, or Whitsuntide at latest. Here, then, is something to do, my child, work for the fire-side in the long evenings. If I can see you with the distaff in your hand, I shall think that we have advanced a good step towards the tranquillity of former times. Be assured that there is in that wheel which turns round, in that cadence of the foot, in that hum of the machine, a sort of domestic song, which, for inward trouble, is like the ancient songs of past ages to the child crying in its cradle. I shall also bring you the almanac for this year, which is fertile in stories, some to excite surprise, others laughter, and a representation of the great earthquake, which has happened in Italy, owing to Vesuvius. Having perceived from the psalm-book, in which the letters are large, that age lengthens the sight, and wishing to read those things to you myself, I bought at Geneva a pair of spectacles, which

bring print so near that it is delightful. They tell me that they are No. 2.

I attend to all your advice, my child, and particularly in those pious matters, of which Jesus our Lord says, that children understand them as well as the learned, if not better. I am neither learned nor a child, at best a simple man, who can receive wisdom from any one, but especially from you, Louise, because your life is pure, your nature pious, and your discourse pervaded with the love which I bear you. I have confidence in God, or what would become of me? I turn to him for support, or upon whom should I support myself? And do you think that the example of poor Widow Crozat, who, for above a year, withdrew her confidence from him to give it back afterwards, is a course that I should like to follow? Happy for her that, during the sojourn which she made on the mountain, Satan did not tempt her, as he did our Lord, and carry her off to his dark abode! But she was a victim rather to her too great faith, than to her unbelief; and God, who is good, stuck to her, as a faithful dog keeps guard by the drunkard stretched upon the high road.

What I write to you for, my child, is to give you a commission for M. Prevere. He will come back to you; but on Sunday he must be at the parsonage, because a fit of the gout keeps M. Dervev at home, as his wife has just now informed me. If, therefore, he set out the day after to-morrow, on Friday we shall cross one another on the road; for I shall leave the parsonage on that day about ten o'clock, and stop only at Geneva, when I shall buy that dress for Martha. So, when those two days are past, I shall have the joy of seeing you again, my child, and of clasping you in my arms.

Your affectionate father,

REYBAZ.

XCVII.

M. PREVERE TO THE PRECENTOR.

Mornez.

I SHALL not be at the parsonage until Saturday, my dear Monsieur Reybaz, that I may be enabled to remain for another day with Louise, and also to pass a few minutes with you. My friendship for you is unalterable, and I hope that yours is proof against the annoyances which with the best intentions I may have caused you.

This departure at the present moment grieves me deeply. At least, I reckon upon returning soon, if this attack of gout is not prolonged. As for her bodily health, Louise is not better for so far. Some symptoms of fever have declared themselves, and the physician has called here two days in succession. As for her mind, she displays, alas! acute suffering, with intervals of perfect calmness. The day before yesterday, she made a little excursion mounted on the ass; but yesterday and to-day she has not left the house: you will find her—or she will appear to you—a little changed; be kind enough to repress your emotion and not to raise any alarm.—Endeavour to arrive here between two and three o'clock; I will go alone to meet you.

Adieu, my very dear Reybaz; receive the expression of my tender friendship,

PREVERE

XCVIII.

THE PRECENTOR TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

Mornez.

It was my intention, Monsieur Prevere, to let these few days pass, before I gave you tidings of the girl; for, when you had just left her, what could I have to tell you? I had better wait, perhaps, till to-morrow, when the doctor will come to ascertain for your information if she has any fever, but I have little patience, and, seeing her calm as she is, and attending to various avocations, I had rather

impart to you my satisfaction, and the idea I have that the fever has passed off without waiting for the doctor.

The real doctor is yourself, my dearest sir. Coming in time, you tempered, soothed, and restored that quiet state, in which, ever since that catastrophe, I had not seen my Louise. That gentle sadness in which I find her, is content, is joy, in comparison with that suppressed grief which was consuming her. At the same time that her constraint is dispelled, her caresses have become more easy, her language more tender. Besides, instead of that listlessness from which she roused herself only to please me or to mislead me, she now employs herself cheerfully for hours about various things. She reads the books which you have brought her; she has resumed her habit of writing, and even her spinning-wheel, which I have seen turning these two evenings, with a delight difficult for me to express in words. It is only when I have set about reading to her, as formerly, the stories in the almanac, that I have found her heart bursting under constraint; either because she disliked the story (it was about a father of a family taken out of a well), or because, being too much engrossed by her own troubles, these worldly things displease her by diverting her attention from them. I very soon cut short the story, without seeming to do so, and shut the book, as if it were disagreeable to myself. It was but a cloud, so she soon regained her spirits. All this filled me with satisfaction as to her, and with gratitude to you, Monsieur Prevere; so that, if it were not premature, and we ought not to reckon the grapes before the bunch is gathered, I should say that, through the goodness of God, we are approaching the end of that cruel crisis, after which this will seem to me a heaven upon earth.

I have delivered to her the letter which I brought from the parsonage, without asking any questions, but without her saying anything about it, contrary to her usual custom, which is to explain the matter in two or three words. And if my suspicions had been awakened concerning it, I should not have been at a loss which way to direct them; for, from that moment, she commenced writing, at which she generally passes three hours in a forenoon. At

another time, perhaps, this might make me uneasy, but I have grown chary of the hours of respite which God grants me, and do not care to destroy their equilibrium by any false movement. Besides, I have confidence in my Louise, and as for curiosity, where wounds are bleeding they rarely itch.

I find Martha more changed, if anything, than Louise, for the short time that I have been away from them. The poor woman is feeble, and as it were, stiff in her limbs, though I cannot say that it is with hard work, her services here being much lighter than at the parsonage. Her eyes also are dull, and her countenance so gloomy that I am afraid it will make Louise sad. I inquired what was the matter; she was silent. I thought to please her by noticing how much better Louise was, but she cut me short without contradicting me. I then conceived that her sorrow for the lad (whose infancy she is not acquainted with) revived by the present which he has made her, had moved her heart; and seeing her eyes swollen with tears, I broke off the conversation.

As the carrier waits for this letter, I am obliged to conclude, though I have still more things to say to you. The most urgent is, to beg you to return soon, so that it may be possible for you to finish your work, and that being once thoroughly fixed in our winter-quarters, we may leave you to your flock. By this time you have seen Louise's chamber, and I shall be glad to have your opinion of it: The wall must be nearly finished, we shall want fine weather to dry it.

Your respectful and affectionate

REYBAZ.

XCIX.

M. PREVERE TO M. ERNEST DE LA COUR.

SIR,

The Parsonage.

If a few weeks have passed since I received your strange letter, the reason is, that I had at first determined not to reply to it. On reading it over again to-day, with more

coolness, I have changed my determination, and I now take up my pen.

In fact, sir, you appear to me to be in a state of mind which is deserving of compassion; I pity you sincerely. I proffer you my counsels; my friendship is yours—it belongs to you, as it does to all the unfortunate beings who can find in it any solace or support. As for my esteem, it only depends upon yourself to obtain it, but that can only be at the price of courage, of sacrifice, and of the accomplishment of duties whose sanctity you do not seem to me to appreciate.

How, sir? You speak to me of esteem, you speak to me of the change in your principles or in your heart, when at the same time you present yourself to me in the light of a man who has allowed himself to become the sport and the toy of his passions, of a son who is the torment and the terror of his mother, who—impious deed!—after having once already attempted to deprive himself of life, seems not to have renounced the criminal project, but to keep it stored up as a last resource, as a last threat, and who forgets in his brutal selfishness, both the law of God and the tears of his mother. Esteem, sir? no, no, contempt for you, and contempt which will weigh upon your memory if ever you should succeed in accomplishing those base designs. And you speak of past errors; they are nothing when compared with your present backslidings. You speak of your insatiable desire to be judged worthy of her. Ah, sir, you are widely astray; and if you think it possible with the same heart to trifle with crime and adore virtue, to offend God and to merit esteem, it is to some other that you must address your vows and your homage, here they would never be acceptable, nor even interesting.

Turn back, Monsieur Ernest, retrace your steps to better ways. You say that your soul is purified; this is the hour to show it, for to rise after a fall is worthy of praise, worthy of admiration, and the highest rewards are not for those who have never stumbled, but for those who, from the depths of an abyss, resume, by a sublime effort, a flight towards the height from which they have fallen. You are unhappy—you are to be pitied; you inspire me

with true compassion. But nothing is lost, the mercy of God is far greater than your sins, and on yourself depends the victory. Do you wish for my helping hand? I offer to you my daily aid. Come to me, come to me, poor weak soul, come. My bowels of compassion are moved for you; come, I will receive you as the father received his prodigal child. Come, I will heal your wounds; and soon convalescent, soon stronger, soon victorious, you will enjoy the peace of God, contentment of mind, the joy of your mother, and the assured esteem of him who now addresses you.

I perceive, my dear sir, in your letter, all the sophisms of passion, all the indications of weakness, all the cunning of desire. Your soul is without a rudder; it floats at the mercy of the stream, which does not even urge it towards those shores for which it fancies it is steering. Therefore, I am not surprised that it has almost suffered shipwreck against the rocks. But I shall be surprised if you do nothing to rescue it from this dangerous situation. Do you wish me to tell you, Monsieur Ernest, at what period it began thus to become the sport of the winds? It was when pleasure, when dissipation, frivolous companions, mocking remarks, had chased from it the last remains of religious feeling, of pious principle. Without restraint for a time, it soon found itself shamefully brought under the yoke of passions which are rude, ungrateful, brutal masters. Are they not, Monsieur Ernest, masters which rule with the strength of God, but which brutalize while He sanctifies, which lead astray, while He reforms, and whilst He saves? Return then to this master, my dear young friend; retrace your steps to the point from which you have strayed, and humbly ask Him for His pardon and assistance. Then you will find, once more, both a rudder and a compass; you will know where you are, you will command the tempest, and you will shun the rocks; the precocious experience you had gained of the pleasures of the world, and of all the doctrines, all the principles, all the delights which can wrap in their embrace both body and soul, ought to lend strength in your eyes to the truths which I here proclaim, for the sinner knows more of the vanity of these things than the just man, and

you have not trodden during your youth in the ways of darkness without knowing now the value of light.

After this exhortation, which you will not find out of place, sir, from the lips of your pastor, and which you will attribute to the sincere interest which he feels for you, I come to that which constitutes the object of your letter. I am not acquainted with the particulars on which you ask me to enlighten you; I have, however, reason to believe, from some words which M. Reybaz wrote to me, that your mother's assertions are founded on overtures which did in fact take place between him and herself. But, if I am unaware of the precise nature of the proceedings, I know, unfortunately, enough of others, which place it in my power to reply to you, and this is what I am about to do with the most entire freedom.

• Mademoiselle Reybaz, sir, is at present in a state of debility which inspires us with the deepest alarm. I look upon her myself as dying. After this duel of which you spoke, M. Reybaz withdrew his promise from M. Charles, and took from him his daughter. From that day forward the latter has become a prey to a decline which is pursuing its course and which approaches its end. Thus, sir, from henceforth banish all hope, and put on mourning—not for your disappointed wishes alone, but also for the most heavenly creature who ever visited the earth. But yet more. Even had Mademoiselle Reybaz been destined to live, it would still have been necessary for you to desist from all pretensions to her hand. Her heart was given to Charles, and she declared to himself that it would never be given twice. She is dying from the effects of being torn from the beloved of her choice, certainly she would not live to have been united to another, to you above all—sir—you who provoked Charles, and who, I am willing to believe involuntarily, but with culpable imprudence, were the first author of the stroke under which he groans, and under which she is fast sinking.

To say the truth, sir, I am astonished at the light in which you pass over this fatal duel, and still more, that you have not felt the situation in which it places you with respect to Mademoiselle Reybaz, a situation which honour

alone—your worldly honour, in default of more elevated motives—enjoins upon you an obligation not to abandon. How then, is it in the ruined hopes of her who had nothing in the world but what you have taken from her, by the consequences of this unjust provocation, that you thought to establish your triumph? Is it enough to cross the sword, and is that sufficient to obliterate the past, to robe the future in brightness? Can you have thought so? But, sir, the selfishness of passion blinded you wholly. In place of groaning over your disappointment, groan for this unfortunate, whose fate you have darkened, whose happiness you have put to flight irrevocably. These are the evils of which you have been the cause; and if you wish to correct yourself and to return to virtue, commence by renouncing your criminal self-love. Acknowledge in short, that if Mademoiselle Reybaz, restored to life, should accept you for a husband, it is you, sir, you, who ought to refuse the honour of her hand. Moreover, sir, there are circumstances of which you are ignorant, and which are not to be laid, in this case, to your charge. I cannot speak to you on this subject but with extreme reserve; there are secrets to keep, there are precautions to take. On the occasion of your duel, M. Reybaz had caused my *protégé*, M. Charles, to relinquish his daughter's hand. He saw, in a short time, that she would not survive this blow given to her first affection, and by degrees he resolved to pardon him. This was the period when your criminal attempt upon your life, and the hasty departure of your mother, were made known. It was the period, also, when a man who calls himself the friend of M. Reybaz, and who assuredly is well aware of the prejudices and weaknesses of that respectable man, commenced against my Charles a base and hideous plot. M. Reybaz, then at Mornex, had pardoned him; he had written to recal Charles, his note was kept back by this officious friend, and three days afterwards, the wretch disclosed to M. Reybaz particulars concerning the birth of my *protégé*. These revelations placed in my friend Reybaz's eyes an insurmountable barrier between Charles and Louise. It is then from this day and no longer, dating from the duel,

that the ruin of these two young creatures commences. Judge now yourself if in any case you could owe the hand of Mademoiselle Reybaz to the successful issue of these dark and perverse machinations, the history and results of which I know, but the cause or first source of which is a mystery in my eyes, unless I prefer explaining the whole by the gratuitous wickedness and ill-nature of this man, who is called Champin.

This mystery, however, is known to God, and the future will reveal it. We shall know then what hand has sought in the darkness, in which the goodness of God had concealed it, this poisoned arrow which winged its flight so fatally, which has struck so surely, so deeply—too deeply indeed—for the wicked one has done a deed which defeateth him. We shall learn in what interest, for what satisfaction, actuated by what ignoble contempt, I do not say of all charity, but of even the commonest humanity, this hellish plot has been undertaken and brought to a successful issue. Woe, woe, then, both during time and eternity, to those who have been its instruments or its authors! Woe to them! for they have immolated an angel, they have destroyed a fine young man, they have already dealt a blow which must infallibly crush to the dust a worthy father! Woe to them!—or rather may our Heavenly Father deign to send them remorse and penitence, and save them through His Son and Saviour.

I have the honour to be, sir, with distinguished consideration,

PREVERE.

C.

LOUISE TO M. PREVERE.

M. Prever.

I MUST take up my pen, my dear master, while I have still strength to hold it. I can reckon now only a short number of days; and, on the point of leaving you, I have much to say. Already it is a task for me to collect my thoughts, to place in some order what I write to you; above all, to maintain myself in a position of calmness and

reflection. Therefore, every time that I take up my pen, it seems to me that it must be the last. But I shall leave such directions that you may carry out the intentions of your Louise when her hour shall have come. This refers only to slight matters, but matters to which my heart attaches a value, and in which, from henceforth, it finds the only solace which suits it.

Before coming to the object which leads me to write to you on the present occasion, I return you thanks, my dear master, for the time which you have devoted to me. I reap the effects of your tender care, my resigned soul is insensibly detached from earth, its ties are unbound, I gird myself up for the separation, and this position in which I am, is not without its sweetness compared with that from which I have emerged. I know not, that if destined to live, I should ever have regained peace of mind, without which there is no happiness; but to-day, if I cannot say that I am happy, at least I am calm and peaceful. This calmness is not attained with much difficulty; the flood of my suffering, ever bitter, is not stormy. I find prayer not merely an exertion, during which the august presence of God imposes silence on my suffering, but as it were a sweet sleep which restores strength to my soul. I recall to mind your conversations, I find in them that support which I require for my tottering steps, and assured that I approach the term of my life, I pass over these intervals of time which separates me from it, as if on a road which conducts out of a gloomy valley. Yes, be assured of it, my dear master, I see from hence my tomb without experiencing much affright; it is a bed of rest in which I shall seek to sleep in the bosom of God, and in the memory of my friends. After a short space of time, they shall join me in it; and whilst now they are disunited on my account, then they will be united through me, they will love each other through me, they will summon me into the midst of them, and I shall be present there. I tell it to them now, whilst my voice sounds in their ears, in order that they may remember it when my lips shall no longer address them.

I come, my dear master, to that subject, the secret of which I don't wish to trust to careless notes which might

fall under other eyes than yours. On his return from the parsonage, my father handed me a letter which was not intended to pass through his hands, and the mystery of which must not be penetrated either by him or by any other whatever, unless perhaps by yourself. I have burned it. They are things which concern Charles's birth. I hesitated whether or not to bury this secret with me, but having reflected, I think there will be some utility in revealing it to you alone, besides it would be painful to me to begin now to conceal anything from you. However, my dear master, I shall adopt in making this revelation a reserve which I think it my duty not to depart from, even towards you, in order that an indiscreet confidence may not embarrass you in the direction of this dear friend's destiny; and therefore I shall tell you how I procured at the time a knowledge of these particulars. I shall not tell you all that I know now, but all that I shall tell you will be in every respect true.

When only nine years old, I thought much of Charles's birth, even when he himself had not dreamed of directing his attention to the subject. In my childish fancy, at that time, seeing this young boy so amiable, so full of generous and brilliant qualities, I felt he could only be the son of noble and unfortunate parents. I pictured to myself that by a succession of romantic adventures, they had been led to place him under the safeguard of M. Prevere until the time when they should come to demand him back again; and this confidence so well placed led me to love without as yet knowing them. Nevertheless, they came not. I felt chagrined; it occurred to me to search out their address, in order to restore to Charles a name and a family. These researches, which I could not extend very far, had no result, and I abandoned all idea of proceeding with them, when about four years since a fortuitous* circumstance occurred to place me in the way of obtaining the truth. Having ascertained it to the full extent, it was such that I thought it my duty to keep it secret; but it made a deep impression on me, and the trouble of my mind was such that it occasioned

* See commencement of this book, letter 149—the note of the curate of Gex transcribed in a letter of M. Reybaz.

the illness which attacked me at the time. Nevertheless, the discovery which I had just made only attached me the more to Charles, and at the same time to you, my dear master. It was then that I, for the first time, confessed to myself the hope of being one day his partner, and of compensating him for all the blessings of which he was deprived. It was then also that the sisterly feeling with which I had previously loved him changed insensibly into that deeper, more vivid, and graver feeling with which I love him now, and which I shall carry with me to the grave.

But what it behoves me to know, Monsieur Prevere, and what Charles must learn at an early opportunity, is that the authors of his days are no more. His father has been dead these twelve years, and this letter which I burned contained the announcement that a month since, his mother had ceased to live. It was to destroy on this head all hope as well as all fear that I determined to speak, as I do before my decease, to close the abyss, since Providence seemed to have called me to do it. Thus, therefore, when the time shall have come, tell Charles that he is an orphan, and tell your friend Keybáz to treat like his child him whom his Louise loved like a brother, and far more than a brother. Tell Charles that if in truth his father, the scion of a good family, did not honour as he ought to have done the name which he bore, his mother, risen from a low condition and thrown into a disorderly mode of life, was not corrupted by it, but was the support and consolation of him who had destroyed her. Tell him that he may without fear honour her memory; tell him that she was forced neither to suffer nor to sink in her distress; tell him in short that he may cherish her memory, for the unfortunate mother wept till her last breath for the infant which was brutally torn from her to be exposed in the courtyard of M. Prevere.

You may easily imagine, my dear master, that I have not kept this secret for four years without much anxiety and hesitation; more than once I have been tempted to reveal it to Charles, and more than once to you; more than once has it troubled my repose, for fear that a word, a sign, a ray of light from some source should draw in

this direction the suspicion or the observation of my father. But what you cannot imagine is that it is this secret which has destroyed me. That day* when I asked for mercy from my father, and when he replied renouncing all idea of constraining my inclination, that day when Charles was restored to me, nay more, when he was not yet taken away from me, that day I felt that there are secrets fatal to the possessors of them. Left alone in my chamber, the mistress of my fate, it seemed to me as if I should abuse a father's confidence in accepting his sacrifice without telling him the truth. It seemed to me that in thus taking advantage of his good faith, I would prepare for myself his reproaches and his contempt, I pictured to myself his malediction as suspended over my head, as ready to crush me if he should happen to discover I had deceived, and according to his ideas, dishonoured him. In despair I gave myself up, I gave up my life against your counsels, notwithstanding your suppliant prayer, notwithstanding the prophetic sadness of your look. My dear master, you now know the motives of the resistance which must have grieved you, but which I have expiated too cruelly to render it necessary to implore your pardon.

This is what I had intended to say to you, Monsieur Prevere; and oh! how much more! But I want courage to proceed. Compelled to recall the past, new pangs arise to overwhelm me, those tears which I had thought dried up, start to my eyes and bedew my cheeks.

What beaming sun gladdened with its gentle rays this future marriage? Oh, my master! my anguish is mortal, my sadness veils the Heavens from my sight! Where is your hand to guide me to the sepulchre?

I wish to speak to you of my father, but the pen drops from my fingers. You will find in my papers directions which I pray you to follow respecting him, and a letter for him, in which I endeavour to soften his grief. Shall I succeed in doing so? I know not: but I know this at least, that from my hands he will pass into yours. I do

* See Third Book, letter 102.

not recommend him to your care; I trust him to you, Monsieur Prevère, and to Charles. You both know how dearly he loved me, of what temper is his soul; and you both, my dear friends, know with what anguish, with what effort I part from him. Converse with him of me—of his Theresa—of our future meeting. Prevent, above all, stifle, the moment it appears, that self-reproach which, in seizing his soul, will enshroud it in darkness, as does the shadow of night the wild and howling tempest. Repeat to him that in a little time he would have lost me, because I inherited an ailing frame from a weak and suffering mother. Tell him, in short, that I expire before the prime of life, but not until I had tasted its sweets, and before I knew its suffering; that I do not, like his Theresa, leave behind a husband and a child—without any indissoluble tie; worthy of the regret of those who loved me, but only to be pitied for having to leave behind me a father, who, led astray by his tenderness, should impute to himself as a reproach that which was the will of God, and which is, perhaps, a dispensation of His goodness.

As for you, Monsieur Prevère, what shall I say to you? my voice at all times is too humble, and to-day too weak. I am your creature, your disciple. You call me your friend. I accept, I cherish this sweet name, but do not call myself worthy of it. I have lived and I shall die under your protecting wing; you have done all for me, without it being given me to do aught for you. But such, my dearly-loved master, is the confidence of your Louise in your heavenly charity, that in leaving you a great and difficult task to accomplish, she knows that she leaves you the only inheritance which you covet, and the only homage which is worthy of you.

Your tenderly affectionate

• LOUISE.

CI.

JACQUES TO HIS FATHER.

Turin.

LAST Friday I went to the post-office by order of Master, and unknown to Madame, to look for a letter which he expected from M. Prevere; it was my task every day for the last two months past. That day the people in the office made me a sign there was something, and that they were to look for it. "Good!" said I to myself, "Master will be pleased, and I also," for this calling by no means diverted me. After this I planted myself before the door to wait. At this moment I saw coming along the street a calèche with Madame inside, whom I knew by the white feathers in her bonnet. I darted into an alley, the calèche drove past the door like a flash of lightning, and on this movement depended Master's life, as you will see. They are at present embalming him, whilst the rest of us are packing up the trunks to return to our native home, where he is to be buried for want of a corner here in their holy ground, which they keep for themselves, offering you the highway, if you like.

The letter received, I returned to the hotel, and long before reaching it I meets Master, who snatches it from my hands and devours the contents. As I was following him, he turns round and says, "Leave me!" We were in the Rue de Po. Having nowhere to go, I walks on straight before me to the bridge, where I stopped to look at a raft coming down the river. Whilst looking at it, up come the dragoons at full gallop, all the people scatter on every side, and then drives past the carriage of the king, and after it, three carriages of the princes and princesses, and after that again more dragoons, and then the crowd coming on behind. Whereupon burped up with the sun and choked with dust, I walked into a public-house and refreshed myself with half a pot, and not without mixing it with water, for their wines, although cheap, go slap into your head. In all, I had spent but an hour, when I took towards the hotel; but lo and behold!

when at the foot of the staircase, I heard a tumult, and I saw on the top-gallery a valet-de-chambre hurrying to and fro terrified looking, and, having entered the room, I found our mistress whom they were laying on a sofa,—her hair was all tossed, her eyes close and shut, blood upon her arm and her gown. The deed was done. Master, after returning to the hotel, had forced Madame's secretaire, to read her papers, after which shutting himself up in his chamber, he drove a couple of balls through his heart. If, therefore, Madame had seen me standing before the post-office, as sure as I write, she would have taken the letter from me, and on returning to the hotel, her presence and her suspicions would have hindered the mishap. I am all right—I had my orders.

Come to herself, Madame's tears and complaints and sobs were enough to cut one to the heart, calling them to give her back her son, always repeating "Wretch, wretch!" whereby I was scandalized, thinking she called M. Prevere thus; but I learned afterwards that it was one called Champin, from whom she received, unknown to her son, those letters which she read in her secretaire and on the sight of which he destroyed himself. Be this as it may, that same evening she called us into her chamber, me and the waiting-maid who was at the parsonage, to tell us that she would give us our mourning and something for ourselves, but this latter on condition only that we should write nothing home of what had happened, except that her son had died of one of those bad fevers, to which all are so subject in this country of sunshine and swamps, but particularly strangers. We promised her. I tell you this for your guidance, and, above all, regarding the parsonage, where you must be the first to announce this fever to them—as well to M. Prevere as to M. Reybaz, in order that Madame may know that I have kept the secret, that we may be able to furnish the proof in case the thing may spread from some other part, as is likely enough.

I will now tell you the end of the affair, as it was talked over in the kitchen. This letter from M. Prevere told Master that although they had laid a plan to destroy M. Charles in looking out his father and mother, who are

found to be taken by justice, this plan would not be of any profit to him, because Mamselle Louise would marry any one before she would marry him. Thereupon, Master being frightened, forced open the secretaire, and found in it the proofs of this plan laid by one called Champin, who received from Madame a hundred louis for doing it; then seeing himself at once deprived of his hope and lost with infamy, he took his life, and three minutes afterwards the coach drove up.

To say the truth, since the first attempt, which the host hindered, it appears Master had only put it off; only these last times, from the letter which he wrote to M. Prevere, and in the time which passed before he got a reply, he had got back again a little of his good humour, except that at post-time when I returned with empty hands, he stormed at me enough to frighten one, just as if I could help it. It is since this change for the better that Mistress ventured to lose sight of him from time to time, and never more than an hour, of which much mischief came, both to him and our poor lady. Since the evening she spoke to us we have not seen her, except Rose, who made her way into her chamber to wait on her, and also the undertaker to receive her orders respecting the embalming and the lead coffin in which Master is to be placed. As for the day we set out, we know nothing yet, except that this morning I got orders to go to the police-office to get the passports, and right glad I was to get back. They made me walk into an office, where I was questioned both about myself and about Master in such a way that I trembled in every limb, knowing that in politics they are not fond of jesting, and that if they only fancy you are doing so, they will send both master and servant to rot in a dark dungeon at six hundred leagues distance from this, in the depths of a forest, nothing to be heard only the noise of chains and phantoms. I told them Master had killed himself for a little love affair, and as far as regards myself I serve at table and scrub the chambers; and more by token, the other day, on the bridge of the Po, I cried "Vive le Roi!" with the others. Thereupon they let me go, and I have scarcely yet done running.

It remains to be seen what will come of all this, and if I shall remain in service, or if Madame will give me the farm, or what else. In the mean time keep your eye about you, and salute M. le Pasteur, whom I think quite right, knowing that he is not wishful to wrong any one; and if it can do me any hurt to tell him a lie about this fever, I free your hands with respect to him, and then tell him all, recommending him to keep it secret, and that I am in all haste to return to a Christian land, especially being of his flock. Thereupon, good morning to you all and to Jeanette, who did well to send Paul Redard away with a flea in his ear, without which I would have left her in the lurch, and it is not he who would have come to bring her out of it.

Your affectionate

JACQUES.

P.S.—We are going by the Simplon, which is a mountain hewed by Bonaparte, where there is a great hole in the rock, going in at this side and leading into the valley. I would like better the open air, only there is no road and nothing but frost and snow, with brigands here and there, who fall on any person who has four sons. Let Jeanette pray lustily morning and evening, and you all. Once escaped out of this den, let them catch me putting my foot into it afterwards.

CH.

MARTHA TO M. PLEVERE.

Mornez.

BE here this evening. Monsieur le Pasteur; I cannot support her father any longer. Let his daughter find, at least, a supporting hand to close her eyes. It is some days since my dear mistress spoke to me of her death, which she knows to be approaching. It was respecting some papers which she wishes you to keep secret from her father. On different occasions since, she pressed me

to cut off her hair, which she wishes to dispose of herself, and I had always refused to do this, when yesterday evening, seeing that she made the attempt, and fearing she might be fatigued, I took the scissors from her hand, and, blinded by my tears, I cut off those dear tresses. That moment M. Heybaz, who I thought had retired to bed, entered. He attempted to speak, but his voice was broken; he uttered a groan, and in silence left the room. I prevailed on my mistress to remain and retire to bed, on condition that I should bring her father back to her. I found him in the lower room, standing in the darkness, and a prey to that mute tribulation which is with him a sign of deep emotion. Without hearing or answering he followed me, and remained with his eyes fixed and his thoughts wandering, while his daughter loaded him with caresses, and spoke of Heaven. He left the chamber at midnight but did not go to bed, and at daybreak he sent off a letter.

At this moment he is walking in the garden and looking up at the window of Mamselle Louise's chamber, to whom I am in haste to return, wishing, if I can, to keep her in bed, and to prevent her coming down stairs till you arrive. She knows I am writing to you. I send this by Chevalier, who will hand it to you; in five hours you can be here. Do not delay, in pity for your servant,

MARTHA.

CHII.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

Mornez.

HE who was harsh and forbidding to you from your early years, as much from instinct, as he was, afterwards, on account of the stain of which you were ignorant, returns to you now. Take his Louise.

I have been tardy in calling you, and even now it is terror that compels me. Already she was taking leave of

the earth; I saw her wrest her hair from the tomb that it might be preserved for you. Come, then, for love of her; save her, that my heart may bless you on better grounds than those on which I cursed you, during this grievous affliction.

Your father and mother, Charles, lived by crime and perished in a dungeon; you are the fruit of their wickedness. Learn these things now--that I accept this loathed stain, that I wish notwithstanding to efface it, and that my Louise will wipe it away.

REYBAZ.

FIFTH BOOK.

As soon as I had received the foregoing letter, I flew to Mornex. M. Prevere had arrived there the previous evening. From that day, we remained united around Louise's couch, and all correspondence ceased between us.

Thus this letter closes a story, the issue of which is but too easily foreseen. I might cease here, and I have attempted to do so; for it is more fitting to throw a veil over these sad days; and moreover, all narrative must be cold in comparison with these letters, in which each of the personages portrays himself in turn, and displays his character and disposition. However, I should regret to disappoint that affectionate curiosity which I flatter myself has been awakened in those who have followed the progress of this story, and it is to satisfy it that I shall now add a few pages to those which go before. My intention is no longer to revive the sentiments and the passions which were still so vividly felt beside the dying couch of Louise; but I shall endeavour, in a short and simple narrative, to conduct rapidly to their close those facts of this history which the preceding book leaves incomplete.

I set out from Lausanne in the afternoon; I passed through Geneva at ten o'clock in the evening: and towards eleven o'clock I was climbing the hill of Mornex, without knowing to which house to direct my steps. But M. Prevere, aware from the morning of M. Reybaz's proceeding, had calculated the hour of my arrival, and had anticipated my feeling of embarrassment on this point. As I reached the summit of that ascent which winds around a deserted quarry, I perceived a man seated. At my approach he arose; I recognised the precentor, and flew towards him. He could not speak; but whilst I

pressed him in my arms, I felt his heart beating violently. At this moment the noise of footsteps announced the approach of M. Prevere. He wished to leave this first interview uninterrupted, and he now joined us to fold me in his arms, and to soften the affliction of M. Reybaz.

"We are," said he, in a short time, "three unfortunates whom a hand from on High strikes with all its force; we shall not for that reason cease to bless it. Charles is prepared, M. Reybaz is less so; his eyes have not been so soon unsealed, because he lived beside this angel whose patience and sweetness deceived irresistibly. Let him therefore pray fervently to God to support us—above all, his daughter, for whom it is still more necessary. Whether it is God's will to restore her to us, or whether—" M. Prevere could not proceed; his grief as well as my own sank into silence before that of the precentor, and we remained a prey to that compassion at once deep and unavailing, which rends the heart and stifles speech. We proceeded in silence towards the house.

Of all the characters of this story, that of the precentor is the best delineated. He is depicted straightforward, sensible, pious, worthy of the highest esteem, but, at the same time, tenacious and obstinate. In the recesses of his heart, a prejudice, or, as M. Prevere termed it, an instinct, which with him savoured of uprightness still more than of pride, was the canker-worm destined to gnaw it, and at last to crumble it into dust. He had never loved me, perhaps never known me, and with the exception of that short interval during which he consented to behold in me the future husband of his daughter, he had for twenty years of his life and from my earliest age hardened his heart against my wishes and against my approach, until that fatal moment when my birth being disclosed to him, he shuddered with horror, and placed that barrier between us which to him appeared insurmountable. It was only then that the real struggle commenced within him, that this energy, of which he often speaks in his letters, was needed in all its force to support his soul between the affright in which his daughter's melancholy had plunged it, and the equally great

horror of incurring a stain which could not be washed away. Doubtless he was blind at times as to the state of Louise; at other times he trusted to the efficacy of his prayers, and the compassion of God towards an innocent creature. Nevertheless his calmness from that moment only served to conceal torture; and when guided by tenderness, or urged on by anguish, he enters Louise's chamber, the reader feels that his mind is about to be detached from these vantage-grounds to which he clings with so much effort. At the sight of these severed tresses, and not till then, he summons me. For a few minutes, perhaps, this sacrifice of his long-cherished animosity and legitimate instinct wiles away his grief; but, from that night his eyes are unsealed, he sees now clearly that he had trilled with and destroyed the happiness and life of his daughter, and his heart became a prey to anguish, as bitter as it was boundless. It was the sight of this suffering which deprived M. Prevere of words, although so well accustomed to console the afflicted, and which banished from my heart all recollection of my own misfortune, and left room in it only for the deepest compassion for him who had been its author.

When we reached the house, M. Reybaz retired to his chamber, and I remained alone with M. Prevere, who was still ignorant of the state of mind in which I had arrived. I informed him that the precentor's letter, instead of filling me with joy, had struck me with terror, and that well convinced that it had only been forced from him by the imminence of the danger, I had hastened thither, certain already that Louise's days were numbered. M. Prevere lost no time in confirming me in this frightful certainty: then, by degrees, turning my thoughts away from myself to fix them on Louise's fate, so sad yet still so capable of being softened, he conversed with me for a long time in a tone full of tenderness and confidence, endeavouring by allusion to his own grief, his esteem, my feelings of piety, the nobleness of soul of which I was capable, and, above all, my love for Louise, to raise and support a courage which, although a little forced was still sincere, and without which I could not have prevented myself from giving way to all the ravings of despair. Whilst he spoke, Martha appeared

at the threshold of the doorway, and addressing M. Prevere almost without remarking my presence: "This expectation is wasting her way," said she; "let Monsieur le Pasteur send M. Charles to her, it will be a solace and a joy for my poor mistress." M. Prevere immediately left the room to assure himself that M. Roybaz was in his own chamber, then returning, he took me by the hand, and, preceded by Martha, we ascended to Louise's apartment. The moment he opened the door, he pronounced my name, and I was folded in her arms.

Louise, informed by M. Prevere with extreme caution, on the previous evening, that I was to be granted the happiness of seeing her again, with the consent of her father, received the intelligence with joy, and without much agitation. Foreseeing that I would not delay, she that evening had expressed a wish not to undress, and I found her seated on the sofa. A deep blush tinged her cheeks, her eyes sparkled with joy, tenderness renewed her strength and gave warmth to her embrace, so that she appeared to me neither in danger nor debilitated. For a moment I thought all these past alarms were but dreams, and I experienced again a transport of happiness which I believed had fled for ever. She perceived it, and as if terrified at my illusion, she wished to temper this intoxication by allowing some words of gentle resignation to fall from her lips. Then, for the first time, her paleness returned, her look lost its brightness, I saw her changed, and I was restored to myself. M. Prevere having risen, entreated Louise to take some repose, and drew me from the apartment.

At daybreak, I descended into the garden, and walked a short distance along the road. The gloomy words of M. Prevere, and the sorrowful presentiment of the precentor, had struck me with terror. Nevertheless, Louise was mine; I was once more beside her, my wishes were crowned with success. Between these startling fears and melancholy joys my heart kept a gloomy equilibrium, and I wandered here and there a prey to a species of stupor. It was now the end of December, the snow covered the neighbouring heights, a sunless day threw a sickly light over these grey rocks and naked forests, so that

the same places which I had once seen so smiling and animated, now presented to me a confused impression, in which the pleasing remembrance I had cherished mingled with the sadness of the reality.

In a short time, M. Keybaz appeared on the threshold. I turned my steps towards him, and without speaking to each other, we moved by common consent from the house. He was more tranquil; his air was affectionate, and without expressing to me more friendship than formerly, he seemed as it were, torn with remorse for having hated me, and as if ashamed and surprised that these instincts, formerly so tenacious, but now banished from his heart, had delivered him up a defenceless prey to the assaults of reproaches and of repentance. When we had walked on for some time, I informed him that I had seen Louise, and I related to him the details of the interview. He heard me without emotion; but when I attempted to speak of the cheering state in which I had found her, and the hope which still remained, his heart was filled, his brow darkened, and without uttering a word, he repulsed these hopes with a gesture of despair. I was silent; then touched perhaps by the situation of a young man, innocent of these things, and whose hopes for the future were blasted, who consoled an old man, the author of so much misery, he seized my hand to press it, his eyes filled with tears, and for the first time in his life he looked at me with tenderness. Instantly my heart bounded with warm affection; I threw myself on his neck, and overwhelmed him with my tears—I was his son. When, that same day, I related the details of that interview to M. Prevere, “Unhappy Keybaz,” said he, in a tone of heart-broken sorrow, “who learns so late, and at such a cost, how quickly hatred vanishes at the first breath of charity.”

Towards the middle of the day, as we were all three assembled in the apartment below, Louise came down stairs leaning upon Martha's arm. She seated herself at table, where a sense of her presence removed from me every feeling of sadness. The sight of her overwhelmed me with pleasure, and at the sound of her voice which I had not heard for so long, I felt a bounding emotion of joy.

It required the presence of M. Prevere, and, above all, that of the precentor, to repress the transports to which, if I had been alone with Louise, I should have given free expression. As for her, wholly absorbed in her father's sorrow, she assiduously guarded every remark and movement, lest she might inadvertently give him pain—repressing her sadness without venturing to feign cheerfulness, and concealing even the pleasure which our long wished-for meeting caused her, in the fear of touching too closely on the thought of an approaching separation. Nevertheless, her sweet smile, her tender observations, her words of melancholy joy were addressed equally to all, while appropriating to each his share; and under the charm of her angelic tones, the precentor himself passed insensibly from this state of forced calmness which he imposed upon himself when in his daughter's presence, to a more tempered sorrow, whose influence, nevertheless, penetrated deeper, moistened his eyes in spite of himself, and gave to his voice the wavering accents of emotion.

Louise had not yet learned from me how I had been received by her father, nor how in the interview of the morning his long cherished prejudice had vanished; but, at the first look, she guessed all, and from almost imperceptible symptoms I saw that bitterness was mingled in her breast with the sweetness of this tardy and fruitless reconciliation. All was now ready for this banquet of union and happiness, which had been the dream of her life—she alone was wanting to the summons. I stood beside her; towards the close of the repast her hand sought mine to press it, to seek from it support to resist the assault of a thousand sorrowful thoughts, a thousand desolating regrets; anguish was depicted in her eyes, her cheeks became like marble, and with the utmost difficulty she retained the deceiving smile upon her lips. I looked at M. Prevere, who, rising from the table, said to M. Reybaz, "Let us leave them together," and they left the room. Then the bitterness of the cup was drained. I throw a veil* over this scene, which words cannot deplet, and which it is not fitting to display to human eyes. I shall only say that there ensued a most violent struggle, a struggle without which a young girl, tender-hearted, adored, and ready to

place upon her head the bridal wreath, cannot take her leave of this earth.

Thus passed this first day. On the morrow, those impetuous feelings which mark the solemn epochs of joy or of misfortune, gave way to a sort of calmness, in the midst of which habit gradually resumed its sway, effacing transports, struggles, and even sorrows in its peaceful and uniform course. Louise's habits, if the inclemency of the season be taken into account, were little changed. Every day, she came down to the apartment on the lower story, to take her slight repast at the same table with us. This was the only moment in which we were all assembled together; at all other times she saw each of us apart. M. Prevere entered her chamber in the morning to converse with her for a short time, until M. Reybaz came to take his place; all the rest of her time was devoted to me until evening. Towards seven o'clock, after we had each given her a parting kiss, M. Prevere caused Martha to retire, and remained a few minutes longer at her side.

I had arrived at Mornex the night preceding Christmas-day; until the closing days of February, the weeks glided past in a tolerably peaceful current, and at this period, Louise's state of health, so far from appearing to become worse, seemed, on the contrary, to have undergone a favourable change. Since my reconciliation with her father, her sorrow had lost its bitterness; my presence beside her filled up her hours, and realised the last wish she had formed; lastly, my assiduous marks of affection were a daily gratification to her, to the enjoyment of which her heart, so long pent up, abandoned itself with a freedom sometimes melancholy and tender, sometimes vivid and powerful. In the midst of these new habits, her decline, the rapid progress of which had struck M. Prevere with terror, seemed to have suspended its course, and, as it often happens, when even the most deceiving appearances correspond with the dearest wishes, whilst some rays of hope dawned on M. Prevere's mind, and even upon that of the precentor himself, I succeeded in forgetting past alarms, and in tasting happiness without alloy. In my eyes, Louise was convalescent; every day I fancied her stronger;

the season alone, I thought, prevented her entire recovery. I was full of life, my heart was overflowing with triumph and with joy; however, out of respect for M. Prevere, M. Reybaz, and for Martha herself, I repressed in their presence the too vivid expression of these feelings, and it was by Louise's side, it was in covering her hands with kisses, in pressing her with transport to my breast, that I allowed my deep-seated joy to find vent, my triumph, gratitude, and love, to pour forth freely. As for her, her letters reveal that she had not expected to live so long; and if, to say the truth, on this last occasion, since the struggle of which I have spoken, she had avoided alluding to her approaching end, it is not to be believed that she had ever regained hope; but looking on those days of respite as the gift of the goodness of God, she exerted herself to avoid disturbing the tranquillity of those around her. Thus, whilst every day, in her conversations with M. Prevere, her thoughts winged their way beyond the tomb, towards the sky and towards eternity, every day, also, without flattering me with hope, without undereiving me, she sympathized in my joy, she welcomed, not without secret sighs, but tenderly and with tears of gratitude, my caresses and my transports. It was, nevertheless, towards this period that she spoke to me of her wish to see the parsonage *once more*. I was so blinded that even the melancholy turn of the expression which she used did not unseal my eyes; I welcomed this project joyfully, and I spoke of it to M. Prevere and to M. Reybaz. The physician was consulted, and it was agreed that early in spring we should all return to the parsonage. Some arrangements were necessary to be made to suit our new habits and the state of Louise's health; these changes were confided to me, and on the twenty-third of March I left Mornex to repair thither.

On the preceding evening, I had a short interview with M. Reybaz, in which he gave me his private instructions. They referred to unimportant particulars, and I was astonished to see him lay stress upon them whilst speaking with an agitated voice, until I perceived that this was only a circuitous method of arriving at the subject which troubled his thoughts. The subject was Louise's chamber.

He wished to instruct me as to the changes he had made in it, and to furnish me with a pretext to speak of them beforehand to Louise, whose surprise he feared when she should see herself surrounded by festive decorations, and in an apartment so changed as to be entirely new to her. But I was obliged to guess much more than he communicated to me; for notwithstanding the circuitous manner in which M. Reybaz approached these reminiscences of recent hope, a melancholy comparison arose in his mind which deprived him of words. I endeavoured to make him share my illusion; but, as on a former occasion, he repulsed my words with his gestures, and sent me away.

I had planned to see M. Dervay when passing through Geneva, to thank him for his past care and to give him news of Louise. He was absent when I called at his house. As I was coming down the staircase, I met an old man going up. At the noise of my footsteps he lifted his head, and turned pale on seeing me. It was M. Champin. I was embarrassed to know how to conduct myself towards him, when, scrutinizing my look and emboldened by my embarrassment, he ventured to address me with the gay and familiar tone which was usual to him. After some remarks, "Will you do my lodge," said he, "the honour of paying it a short visit? I live out of the world there, and without knowing anything of the friends of whom you could give me intelligence." I followed him into his lodge, but not without a feeling of repugnance, it recalled so strongly many hateful recollections. I was entirely ignorant of the correspondence of M. Champin with Madame de la Cour, and the part which he had taken in the discovery of the secret of my birth; so that willingly pardoning him for his old prepossession against me, I felt grateful for his welcome, and quite ready to forget the past and renew my friendship.

M. Champin is the author of Louise's death and of the ruin of my hopes. If it would be, in truth, unjust to measure the wickedness of this man by the extent of the evils he caused, it would be equally senseless to look upon him in the light of one of those monstrous beings, the type of whom is only found in the imaginations of romance-writers. Covetousness, and a spirit of intrigue belonging

to a large class of men, are the causes of many base and wicked actions. Pride, want of principle, and that unruliness of the tongue which leads idle people to speak and to spread abroad evil in preference to good, to divulge what is secret with more pleasure than what is known to all, are, at the same time, traits common to a host of men and are the fruitful springs of evils and catastrophes. M. Champin, uniting to these defects qualities of mind and intellect which are not generally the lot of men in his condition, only did what all such men would do, if they happened to find themselves in a situation similar to his, without having sought for it. From the beginning, his curiosity was fixed on this mystery, the veil of which he was himself subsequently to raise; his malicious disposition was employed to mis-represent my proceedings; then, taking credit to himself for the very lowness of my birth, he took offence at my just discontent—without being yet depraved, he was envenomed. After the duel, an instinct of avarice and that base pride, actuated by a contradiction which belongs to it, and which towers on one side while it creeps on the other, drew him towards M. Ernest De la Cour, whose cause he spitefully served, much more to revenge himself for my contempt, than from any motive of generosity or attachment towards this young man or towards M. Reybaz. Up to that point, whilst still remaining the same that he was, he was nevertheless only what so many beings of his sort are whom chance alone prevents from committing the most culpable deeds. But when, subsequently, the pride and malice of this depraved man found a flattering appeal in the urgent entreaties of Madame De la Cour, a pretext in her misfortune, and a bait in her wealth, then he pandered to the prejudices and promoted the plans of his friend; and when this unfortunate, trembling at what he has done, totters, hesitates, and is about to escape from the net in which he is ensnared, the audacious porter, to keep him bound in his meshes, descends to crime; he destroys me, and with me all whom he pretends to save. Striking example of those evils which the base passions and secret plots of a wretch sow in the shade of those secret crimes which the law cannot reach, which gnaw and devour in the darkness, and of

which many men taste in different degrees, to whom neither the fear of God nor the love of their fellow-creatures supplies the place of an honest heart.

It may have appeared strange that such a man should be the friend of M. Reybaz; but, nevertheless, who has not observed how often the recollections of childhood, equality of condition, analogous tastes, and the same amount of education, are sufficient to draw together men of different disposition and of still more different morality? But, moreover, in this case, their friendship was of old standing rather than continuous, familiar much more than intimate. For a long time, it found its subsistence in the relations of youth and pleasure; subsequently, it would have died away of itself, had it not been for the circumstances which occurred to renew it in a manner so fatal. When, for six years, M. Reybaz and M. Champin, the one secluded at the parsonage, the other kept close to town by his trade, had not met, for this is shown by M. Champin's first letter to the precentor. Moreover, M. Reybaz, skillful, in truth, in the knowledge of human nature, by virtue of that conscientious uprightness which led him unceasingly to examine himself, to fathom his motives and intentions, was yet little skilled in men, unpractised in analysing the character and determining the value of individuals. To such a task he brought instinct rather than reflection; he gave vent to his dislikes and his sympathies much more than he reasoned on either, and this explains his indulgence towards his friend and his severity towards me. It explains also, how, though firm and obstinate in his own opinion, he agreed with M. Champin much more than he was led by him, and ended by becoming the victim, and not the dupe, of this scoundrel. Lastly, the latter employed such underhand dealings, and was guilty of actions, the existence of which his honest heart had never dreamed; and if he was aware that his friend, to save him from disgrace, had gone so far as to search out Charles's parents, he never, for one instant, suspected that in such a line of conduct, he was actuated by cupidity, or even by pride.

M. Champin makes allusion, in his letters, to the troubles of our Revolution. He had taken no part in it

which could have caused him to be distinguished; but, with others in his condition, he attained to power, and had witnessed with satisfaction the humbling of the aristocratic families. It was during this period that he became imbued with ideas, respecting religion and its ministers, at once hostile and mocking, and contracted a boldness of thought and a rebellious hatred towards the authorities. The course of events had subsequently restored him to his proper place; but, whilst from his opinions and his previous course of life, he still remained a jealous enemy of the rich and powerful classes, the feeling of his abject station and his necessities, or else the promptings of his avarice, rendered him servile and crouching towards individuals occupying a lofty condition, with whom he was brought into contact by circumstances, or by his interests. By another contradiction, common enough among old people who had lived through this period when it seems natural that they should be favourable to all the new phases of progress arising from the Revolution, and, in particular, the enfranchisement of industry, previously chained down by guilds and wardens, he felt, on the contrary, contempt for modern projects, and regret and esteem for the things of the olden time — this watch of the precentor's, for example, gives him occasion, in one of his letters, for an outburst of spleen against modern watchmakers. This generation of men, the offspring of a Revolution which frees the mass of the people from sentiments of respect for order, for kindly feeling, and for religion, and lets them loose against those who oppress them, and during a long time also against those who govern them, sink into oblivion, but only to spring up again every time that the same storms are renewed, to show at what a high price society purchases advantages often questionable; to show, above all, what evils are prepared for humanity by these men, who, whether as men or classes of men, whether oppressors or stirrers-up of agitation, render inevitable those violent shocks from which a people emerges more free but less good, enfranchised, but disorderly and slow to resume the virtues of their stations.

I entered Champin's lodge. The wily old man, while

appearing only to question me respecting the inhabitants of the parsonage, soon perceived that I was not aware of any of his underhand dealings, and a feeling of joy mingled with a sense of security was visible in his features. He spoke to me respectfully of M. Prevere, with decency and interest of Louise, in mentioning her *à propos* of other young girls who had suffered from disappointed affection and whom the accomplishment of their wishes, although tardy, had restored to life. Then, taking advantage of my total ignorance of M. Ernest's fate, to touch upon this delicate topic, "It was," he said, as if incidentally, "the fever of the country which carried him off; he was besides badly treated by the physicians, and bled at an improper time. Who knows? There are not wanting people who say that he helped the bleeding, if he did not do it himself." I heard these words with deep agitation, thinking with compassion on the sad fate of this young man thus taken from his mother, and with affright at these mysterious remarks respecting the manner of his death. With these impressions I rose to retire, whilst M. Champin endeavoured to retain me, endeavouring with gay and affectionate remarks to banish my melancholy, and to lull my curiosity to sleep. I insisted on going. Then he descended the staircase with me and accompanied me into the street, where he had the art to retain me for a few minutes longer, as if to make the passers-by and neighbours witnesses of our interview; and after having bade me farewell, he remained upon the threshold following me with his looks until I turned the corner of the street. This was the last interview I had with M. Champin, although having reached an extreme old age, he survived the greater number of the personages mentioned in this story. M. Prevere had penetrated his character and judged him correctly, while a portion of his plot was still buried in the deepest secrecy, and when Madame De la Cour, who alone perceived its odious wickedness, recoiled with terror. For myself, I soon was made acquainted with this plot; nevertheless M. Champin died only a year ago, without having met on this earth the punishment of his deeds, or even the contempt and hatred which he deserved from men. None of us over

dreamed of drawing down a useless vengeance on the head of this old man by disclosing his underhand plots. Madame De la Cour, the only person who would have been directly interested in doing so dismissed it from her thoughts the moment she received from M. Prevete esteem, pity and affectionate consolation, instead of blame and suspicion. One man alone in the parsonage, whose heart the revelation would have deeply wounded, and whose misfortune they would have aggravated, by showing with what a wretch he had been unwittingly an accomplice, died without knowing M. Champion's proceedings. This was the precator, and his noble and upright conscience reproached itself less deeply for its fatal obstinacy and the too tardy sacrifice of its instincts and its prejudice, that it was not visited by the terror of having caused the triumph of the dark plot of a villain. Therefore, M. Champion dragged on a long succession of years without seeing that storm which was always hanging over his head burst forth. He was able from the recesses of his lodge to contemplate in peace those tombs opened by him and swallowing up, one after another, his victims; no noise in it without—scarcely a murmur—disturbed him in his career, his infirmities soon held him captive, and towards the close of his life, he subsisted on the charity of his son-in-law, now a widower, and on the alms of M. Drey. It is only a few months since I informed this clergyman on what a wretch his benefits were conferred; and on questioning him in my turn, I was confirmed in the suspicion that M. Champion, during those years of solitude and reflection, vegetated in the languor of his false and sluggish peace, without feeling the remorse of an upright heart or the consoling repentance of a religious mind.

I proceeded towards the parsonage, deeply surprised with what I had just heard respecting M. Ernst. But, in proportion as I approached it, the object of my thoughts was changed. No sooner did I enter the hamlet than I was surrounded by the peasants, who on seeing me, ran towards me, calling each other and rushing from their houses, to welcome me with a thousand marks of affection, and to overwhelm me with questions regarding M. Reybaz and his daughter.

None of them suspected Louise's life to be in danger, and their security communicating itself insensibly to me, I gave them still more favourable news, not without being arrested at every step by additional inquirers, to each of whom I was obliged to repeat the same tidings. The greater number accompanied me as far as the parsonage. This loved dwelling-place of my childhood, adorned in the summer season with all the glories of trees, of herbs, of flowers, and of plants, which cover with verdant foliage the hoary age of antique walls, was then grey as the heavens, and cold as the air. The moment I entered, I proceeded straight to Louise's chamber. Overcoming the emotion which seized me there, I immediately busied myself with the arrangements about which I had in view. They consisted chiefly of precautions to be observed against the rigour of the wintry season. I caused all the apartments in the dwelling, to be aired, in order to expel the damp which might have been left in them by the repairs undertaken the preceding autumn, and I requested the poor Widow Crozat to come and take up her residence till our return, in this dwelling so long deserted, in order to keep up the fires, and to have it warm and comfortable. When these preparations and some others were concluded, I was about to set out again to Mornex, when an incident occurred which obliged me to stop another night in the parsonage.

On my arrival, the peasants had acquainted me with the rumours afloat respecting M. De la Cour's death. Thinking that I should obtain some information on the subject from Jacques's parents, I called upon them, but finding that they had been compromised by previous indiscretion, they pretended to know nothing but the vague reports circulated through the hamlet, without my one knowing whence they came. I was therefore still at that point where M. Champin had left me, when the following day, about two in the afternoon, two carriages with post-horses were seen to approach the village. From the box-seat of one of them Jacques leaped to the ground and ran to bid good-morrow to his family: he was in mourning. He informed them that Madame De la Cour was in the first carriage, and that in the second was the coffin of

M. Ernest, who had died at Turin of the fever of the country. Without stopping longer, Jacques set off, running to overtake the carriages, which at this moment were slowly ascending the hill leading to the parsonage, and soon after entered the avenue and drew up before Madame De la Cour's mansion.

Madame De la Cour had chosen for her arrival the moment when, the inhabitants of the parsonage being still all assembled at Mornex, she would find herself at liberty to dispense with those proceedings which etiquette would require, and which her present position with regard to them would have rendered painful or impossible. But, whilst the carriage ascended the hill she saw with astonishment that the windows of the parsonage were open, and that smoke was proceeding from the chimney; and having questioned Jacques, she heard of Louise's approaching return and my presence. This news threw her into a state of agitation. No sooner had she alighted from the carriage than she sent a servant to request me to call on her before I should set off for Mornex. I replied I should be with her in an hour; and before that time, I had set out towards the chateau. In crossing the vestibule I perceived a coffin laid out in the lower chamber, with a person in mourning watching beside it. The sight made a deep impression on me, and I reached Madame De la Cour's apartment pale and trembling. I was immediately ushered in.

On seeing me, this lady stretched out her hand with an expression of countenance in which were displayed, at the same time, compassion and a painful effort. "Tell me," said she, looking steadfastly at me, "something about Mademoiselle Heybaz; why this long absence of M. Prevere? why these gloomy letters?" Without comprehending the full bearing of these questions, I replied by describing to her Louise's state of health such as I represented it to myself. When I had concluded,— "May God grant that you are right," replied Madame De la Cour; then, seizing my hand and pressing it warmly, "Ah! Charles, Charles, when you know all, in place of hating, you will pity me; I am the first victim of this monster." I had no idea of the meaning of these words.

Madame De la Cour perceived it, and giving way to an agitation which she could not overcome, "Well," exclaimed she, rising, "learn all: this burden is too weighty for my heart!"

Whilst saying these words, Madame De la Cour, influenced by feelings which imposed silence on her grief, approached a table on which was laid a little casket, whence she took a bundle of papers and returned to her seat. Then, for the first time, I was made acquainted with the plot, the thread of which the reader has followed in the correspondence with Champin which Madame De la Cour held in her hands, and I learned the underhand proceedings of which I was the victim. When she had concluded this narrative, during which grief, resentment, and regret at times moistened her eyelids, and sometimes gave animation to her words, she opened the bundle, and collected from among Champin's letters those which gave the best evidence of the cunning and wickedness of this man. She showed me that which M. Reybaz had written to her; and lastly, she placed before my eyes those lines of M. Prevere which had taken from her son all hope, and, in disclosing to him the proceedings which had been undertaken for my destruction, had aroused his despair, augmented his shame to its height, and armed his hand against himself. I felt, in reading these documents, much more grief than resentment. Rivetted as my attention had been on the struggles, the fears, the gloomy griefs of which Louise in all these letters was the object—and, above all, in the last; governed by these impressions—I felt the illusion which still remained to me vanish; nothing but gloom now dwelt in my recollection; and when Madame De la Cour, terrified at my dejection, put to me some pressing questions, I destroyed, one by one, in reply to them, those hopes which I had given her a few minutes before, until at last she exclaimed in a despairing voice, "She is lost, and M. Prevere was not mistaken!" At this exclamation I remained struck with stupor, my tears were dried up, and when Madame De la Cour, overcome with anguish, seemed to have forgotten my presence, I felt the most eager desire to leave her. The reason was, that our misfortune had

nothing in common, except in having reference to the same object. My heart bled with sorrow, hers was assailed with reproaches, and I frozen with terror. I took my leave sadly, without her attempting to detain me, or speaking of seeing me again, and I returned to the parsonage. In leaving the avenue I met Antoine, who handed me a note which had arrived during my visit to the chateau. It was as follows.—

“CHARLES,—

“Return to your Louise—return, my well-beloved, and let us repair towards this place which I long so much to see again. My father’s resolution is wavering; he is almost ready to abandon all idea of this journey. In order to strengthen his determination, and to spare him this struggle, bring two carriages with you to Mornex.

“LOUISE.”

I set out the following morning before daybreak, that I might enter Geneva as soon as the gates of the town should be opened. I there hired two carriages, and, about ten o’clock in the morning, arrived at Mornex. But, great as was my impatience to see Louise, I was not permitted to enter her apartment till the evening, when the fever subsided, which now only left her at short intervals. She welcomed me with tender caresses, mingled with words of resignation; then, raising by degrees the last veil, she spoke to me of her dissolution. I was able on this occasion to subdue my own grief and to console her. In a long interview, I told her my resolution, my projects, my promises; I received the sacred deposit of her last wishes, her last intention-, of her hopes, and, lastly, of that tenderness, that patient and Christian sweetness, the consoling charm of which it seemed that, so near winging her flight from earth, she wished to leave among her friends.

That very evening, along with Martha and M. Prevère, we made arrangements for our departure, after having obtained M. Reybaz’s consent, who seemed to be chained down by a sort of stupor to await his fate on this rock of

Mornex. The following day, when we were placing the luggage in a cart, he attempted for a moment to assist in the preparations; but, at the sight of the spinning-wheel and other articles belonging to Louise, his emotion overcame him, and he returned. The cart set out first. When all was ready, Martha and I entered the carriage where Louise was waiting for us, stretched out in a seat, while M. Prevere and the precentor de acquainted the vehicle. The latter has followed the carriage.

During this sad journey, Louise conversed with Madame Martha and me, mingling with her discourse under the marks of affection and gratitude, and doing her utmost to diminish beforehand our future regret by these, the last recollections we should preserve of her. When we approached Geneva, she cast her eyes over those ramparts, those houses, those antique towers of St. Peter's, as if to bid a last adieu to her country. But when we had traversed the town, and were approaching the parsonage, she sank once more into silence, and her eyes filled with tears, which she endeavoured to conceal from our sight. M. Prevere had requested the villagers not to surround the carriage, nor appear to pay any attention to it, nor to recognise any one, but to carry out his intentions better, these good people remained in their houses, looking from behind the windows, not allowing Louise to perceive the passive and forbearing curiosity of which she was the object. In the midst of this deserted hamlet, one young child, the orphan already mentioned, from the threshold of a stable where she was standing, recognised Louise, and rushed towards her, uttering cries of joy. Louise stopped; the child jumped upon the steps of the carriage, looked in at the window, and not observing in her joy the paleness of her benefactress, expressed her artless delight, to which the latter replied with cheerfulness. The carriage once more moved on, and after having climbed the ascent, turned towards the pond, and at last stopped before the door of the parsonage. M. Prevere awaited us on the threshold. On seeing him alone, Louise immediately asked him where her father was. "He will be here in a short time," replied M. Prevere. These words threw a cloud over Louise's countenance, but without inquiring farther, she

descended from the carriage, and slowly entered the house. When she reached the middle of the corridor, she was obliged to pause for a few moments. I supported her in my arms, and when she had regained some strength, I assisted her to mount the little staircase which led to her own chamber, which she entered. At the sight of the changes which had been made in it, at these decorations of the chateau. It was joy and hope, she seemed struck with emotion, and seating herself in a chair,

“CHARLES,—” remained there leaning upon me, and

“Retreat,” my hand which she moistened with her tears to console and support her inspired me with courage and calmness. As soon as I had restored her, in some measure, by my remarks and by my caresses, she expressed a wish that I should join her father, and I left the room as soon as Martha had come to assist her into bed.

I found neither M. Prevère nor M. Reybaz in the house. M. Reybaz, accustomed to the open air of the country, never dreamed of seeking solitude in a chamber; and if he was ever overcome by any sorrow, he left the house as if to breathe alone and more at his ease. No sooner had he alighted from the carriage than he sought refuge in a solitary place, where he was accustomed formerly to take a sleep during the heat of the day. There I found him, in company with M. Prevère, who had only left him for a minute to present himself at the door upon Louise's arrival. M. Reybaz, paying little attention to the exhortations of his friend, sometimes arose, sometimes remained seated, muttering to himself in broken sentences. I walked straight up to him, and conjured him to have some self-possession; I told him I would be a son to him, a support united to him for ever by the same love and the same veneration which we cherished for his Louise; but that before all else, it was our duty to soften the bitterness of her dying hour, and at this very moment she was suffering from not having seen him yet. At these last words his agitation appeared to cease, and rising, he said, “Let us go and see her.” We repaired together to Louise's apartment.

Martha was there, and made a movement to retire.

M. Reybaz, casting on this poor woman the same look of affection with which he would have regarded his Teresa, "Remain, Martha," said he, "I have more friends than I am worthy of!" Then approaching Louise, he embraced her, and seated himself by her bedside. "My child!" resumed he, "I did not forget the advice you gave me in your last letter. This chamber I had furnished anew for you; if it be not the will of God, do not fear that I shall murmur. May it be a worthy antechamber to the dwelling to which He calls you, and where your mother awaits your coming!" The precentor continued to converse, whilst our hearts received consolation and comfort from his words. For the first time, in fact, we ventured to speak together of our common sorrow; and our affliction, stripped of restraint, and placed under the protection of God, was deep without being so bitter as formerly. Martha burst into tears; M. Prevere listened with an air of gravity, and as if touched with the religious effort of his friend; and Louise, agitated but consoled, lavished on her father the tenderest and most affecting caresses. She endeavoured to express to us the happiness she tasted in seeing us around her united and resigned, and she said that day all that she wished to say to us in common.

During the few following days, her decline was rapid, but her calmness every moment increased. It was now the beginning of April, the trees were commencing to bud, and the sun to gladden more frequently the face of the country. Two or three times, Louise expressed a wish to be placed near the window; we were obliged to carry her there in our arms. During all the intervals of freedom which she enjoyed from pain or fever, we remained beside her, sometimes conversing with her on pious subjects, sometimes on the affairs of the people of the village, or the little commissions which she gave us to execute for them.

As the fatal moment approached, we all, and particularly the precentor, enjoyed more calmness. Admiration for Louise inspired us with a sort of enthusiasm in her presence; her courage communicated itself to us, our attentions towards her were redoubled, so that in the

in the midst of emotions so varied, and of days so fully occupied, our grief was as it were suspended. On the twenty-fifth of April, feeling herself rather stronger, she summoned to her bedside her orphan, the Widow Crozat, and some women whom she loved on account of the affection which they had always shown to me. She said a few words of friendship and farewell to each; and on the twenty-sixth, while we were all standing by her bedside, her eyes became dim, the words died away on her lips, her hands in seeking ours alone expressed her feelings, and at sunset she entered into the bosom of her God.

From this narrative I have excluded myself. As a simple spectator, I contemplate this young creature fading away; and my soul is stirred to its deepest recesses. What words can give an idea of this sight? What images can paint it? In this case, it is more than a lily cut down by the mower's scythe, more than youth, and grace, and beauty, struck by an un pitying hand; it is virtue, purity, filial tenderness, perishing, the victims of themselves—spectacle to inspire us either with affright and eternal murmuring, with dazzling and immortal hope, with impious despair, or with submission full of confidence, respect, and love.

The news of this death spread mourning and regret through the little village of which Louise had been the ornament and the protectress. The sad intelligence was received with touching testimonies of affection, and those poor peasants felt they had lost a blessing which would never again be theirs. Of their own accord, they abstained from all noise in the neighbourhood of the parsonage; they repaired in silence to their work, and suspended their evening games; they remained collected under the porches of their houses, conversing upon the affliction at the parsonage, and this young lady who had risen from their rank, while still remaining the friend of all, and the protector of their children. On the following day, M. Prevere feeling sensible of this mark of deep and affectionate regret, and anxious, by associating himself with it, to give it some useful direction, walked down to the village and seated himself in the midst of his parishioners. He spoke to them of Louise and of her end,

and of the place which they all held in her heart. He expressed his admiration of that spirit which had given to a frail young creature the courage of a strong man, that beneficence which had so early shown itself in her, and that intelligence which was so powerful to succour and console. The women, more easily touched, and with whom Louise, taking share in their domestic cares, had been more intimately connected, burst into tears, and the men, rude as such villagers are, listened with grave and compassionate respect. Whilst he spoke, M. Prevère drew towards him Louise's orphan, recalling to her mind the marks of affection of her protectress, bestowing upon her caresses in which his own grief found matter for consolation. When he arose to retire, the villagers uncovered. One of them asked, in the name of all, where the funeral would take place, that they might arrange their work so as to allow every one to show his respect for the young lady. M. Prevère informed them that it would be on the following day at one o'clock, and left them, accompanied by two of the elders, who came with him as far as the parsonage.

During his absence, Madame De la Cour had sent for him. He proceeded to her, leaving me with the precentor. This unfortunate lady's despair, when she heard of Louise's death, burst forth in exclamations of sorrow and remorse, and whilst the true author of so many evils lived behind the shelter of his cunning and falsehood, she accused herself openly of unworthiness and of crime. It was to these violent feelings that M. Prevère found her giving way. He had always felt a suspicion that M. Champin had been urged on from this quarter, and the reports which had been spread respecting M. Ernest's death confirmed this. Nevertheless, with the tact of a man full at once of indulgence and discernment, he had never doubted but that the really criminal portion of the deed belonged only to Champin. As for Madame De la Cour, the goodness of whose heart and the uprightness and generosity of whose sentiments he knew, he had never attributed to her other failings than those of weakness or imprudence, or imputed to her any other crime than that of inconsiderate proceedings into which the grovelling

ejection of her son had dragged her. Animated by this hope, he presented himself before Madame De la Cour, certain, as he said, that she accused herself unjustly, and that her honest heart turned her just regrets into reproaches. He heard her, he compassionated her, with that authority of character and charity which acquires for him the empire of hearts; and, after having restored her to calmness, he told her that he hoped to remain her friend, and that it would be a necessary comfort to him to speak often of Louise to those who had known and respected her. Since then, he has kept his promise; his conversation saved this old lady from despair, and, although she was never consoled for having been the involuntary cause of Louise's death, although she wept for her loss even more bitterly than for that of her own son, the friendship and attentions of M. Prevere, and those which I had the happiness of paying her, contributed to tranquillize her conscience, and to restore to her that repose which she enjoyed during the fifteen years which she survived Louise.

The following day, from nine o'clock in the morning, all the inhabitants of the village and of the scattered dwellings of the adjacent country were assembled under the eaves of the parsonage, on the side opposite to that on which the preparations for the funeral were being made. In the distance, through the orchards and behind the hedges, the mothers and daughters contemplated these sad preparations. In a short time, the coffin was brought down, and placed before the shade of the door: on it was seen the wreath of white flowers, which, according to our custom, adorns the coffins of those who die unmarried. Behind walked the precentor, having by his side the betrayer of his daughter; after them M. Prevere and a villager, a relation of Teresa; behind, two elders of the village summoned in place of relations on Reybaz's side. This sad procession commenced its march, and on reaching the doorway of the church, all the men brought up the rear, two and two, in the deepest silence. When it reached the burying-place, those in front of the procession stopped before a grave, very near that in which, three weeks before, M. De la Cour had been buried. Whilst the coffin was being lowered into it, M. Prevere approached the

precentor and attempted to draw him away from this sight, but the latter waved him off, and remained gazing with fixed and tearless eyes on the gravediggers at their work. When this was concluded, he himself gave them the funeral fee, and, leaning on me, he remained a few moments motionless, and then took his way back to the parsonage. There the six principal mourners of the procession took their places opposite the threshold of the door, and all the villagers having passed before them with uncovered heads, dispersed into the hamlet whilst we re-entered the house.

When Martha saw us come in, that humble and compassionate woman, who, so long occupied, both day and night, beside Louise's couch, had smiled upon her till the last moment, gave way to transports of the deepest affliction. She wept even for those mortal remains, beside which she had watched with tender and consoling care. M. Reybaz approached her, embraced her, and in a tone full of affection, "Martha!" said he, "it did not rest with you that Louise should live, nor with me that she should not die; *you have chosen the good part, and it shall not be taken away from you.*"

In the evening of the same day M. Prevere held a conversation with me, and imparted his wish that I should remain at the parsonage during the summer, and not resume my studies till the approach of winter. He wished this for his own sake, and especially for that of M. Reybaz, to whom my presence, my affection, and my care, were becoming every day more and more necessary. M. Prevere told me that he reckoned, henceforth, on the resignation and courage of his unfortunate friend: but that he was not without fear for the ravages which this terrible blow had already made on his constitution, or for those which might still be made. "My only consolation, my dear child," added he, in a tone of emotion, "is to accomplish religiously Louise's wishes." He ceased, and we mingled our tears.

In fact, this unfortunate father had been struck to the heart, and the alteration which took place in his features, from this period, only too well justified the gloomy forebodings of M. Prevere. M. Reybaz's countenance was

not one of those which are easily effaced from the memory by being confounded with common men; his frame was nervous rather than strong; his air grave; his manner impressed with dignity, and his rustic costume always attractive from the fresh and simple neatness with which it was worn. But that which really adorned this man was the uprightness of his heart, visibly imprinted on his weather-beaten, sun-burnt features. Passion and cares were painted there; but also that grave austerity, that quick and artless feeling, that habit of thought, which in him took the place of education and experience. Accessible to a thousand powerful and delicate feelings, as unskilled in dissembling them, as inclined from a sort of natural reserve, to repress their display, his features were ever a mute but faithful mirror, and all those movements of the heart which his words did not express, his eyes revealed with a frank and hearty simplicity. Until the period when I left the parsonage, and on that last occasion when he came to town with Louise and M. Prevère, he had still, in addition to the manly bearing of ripe age, all the freshness and vigour of youth, and his short and curling hair still preserved its brilliant jet. But when I saw him again, it had changed in the space of a few short months to premature whiteness, and wrinkles had deepened upon his forehead; suffering had hollowed his cheek and broken his strength, and he seemed now only the shadow of that man whose robust frame had involuntarily called to mind those knotted oaks, whose sap is powerful, and whose age it is difficult to determine.

Therefore, notwithstanding his religious efforts at resignation, and although attentive to our advice, and sensible of our least cares, M. Reybaz was visibly hastening after his Louise. During the first few days he resumed the occupations which were rendered necessary by the disarrangements which had been occasioned in his little property by his absence, and by the expenses attendant upon illness. He busied himself in country labours, and at the end of a month's time he attempted to resume his functions as precentor. But he was no longer for this world; his very efforts turned against him, and those vain endeavours

were scarcely sufficient to preserve him from a painful solitude, or to enable him to restrain an affliction every day becoming deeper. He himself felt that he was wasting away, and without daring to rejoice at this feeling, he drew from it a sort of consolation and a courage which enabled him to support the burden of a life which he should not long endure. Except during the moments when he was occupied, M. Prevere and I never left him alone, and I slept in his chamber. He received our attentions with humble gratitude; he listened to our remarks; he acquiesced in our opinions; but whilst he submitted to us that will which, urged by the recollection of his former obstinacy, he seemed to have abandoned, in the deepest recesses of his mind there dwelt a growing chagrin, a devouring regret, and an incurable sorrow. Towards the close of the year, he was obliged to give up all idea of filling his situation as precentor, and his health became so uncertain, that in the month of November, that period when, according to our plans, I was to resume my studies, M. Prevere thought it right that I should not leave the parsonage. I remained to witness the rapid decline of the precentor, who expired in our arms on the 19th of December, ten months and seven days after his daughter's decease, beside whom he was buried. I shall only lay before the reader, respecting this upright man, so interesting and so worthy of pity, this last document, which was found after his death in the place where he had himself pointed it out. It completes his portrait, and forms a worthy close to his history:—

“I, Pierre Reybaz, being in the enjoyment of my sound mind so as to be enabled to express my remorse and my last wishes, write this document, which is my will and testament.

“Since the day when Charles was laid on the pavement in the court-yard, M. Prevere has followed the straight way of the Gospel; but I have swerved from it.

“Without being among the number of the greatest sinners, I have caused great evils. My heart was purified late of the leaven of pride; and, when my eyes were unsealed, the hand of the Eternal was laid heavy on my

daughter. I implore His mercy, I adore the lash of His wrath, and I die trusting to His compassion. —

“ I bequeath of my property 500 florins to the poor of the parish, 300 to the Widow Crozat, and 1,000 to my good Martha.

“ I bequeath to Champier two covers of silver marked with my name; and, as he is not wealthy, in addition, a present of 200 florins, put aside in a drawer to the left, with his name written on them. I have no cause to pardon him, since he thought he was serving me; but, if he has gone astray with me, let him amend with me.

“ Amongst the effects belonging to Louise, M. Prevero and Charles will share between them what may be most pleasing to their memory of her, with the condition that these effects go, as a whole, to the last survivor, who will see that they are destroyed, rather than that they pass into other hands.

“ The surplus of my property, comprising what I inherited from Theresa, the details of which are added here, I leave to Charles, as a gratuitous gift of affection. I trust in his forgiveness, and I implore on his head the blessing of God, until he rejoins us.

“ PIERRE RIVAZ.”

